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#### THE

# Confirming Work

OF

# RELIGION

OR,

Its Great Things made plain,
By their Primary

Evidences and Demonstrations.

Whereby the meanest in the Church, may soon be made able to render a Rational Account of their Faith.

Written by R. Fleming, Author of the Fulfilling of the Scriptures.

Now Published by Daniel Burgess.

#### LONDON,

Printed for Tho. Parkburst at the Bible and Three Crowns, the lower end of Cheapside. 1693.

#### THE

### Publisher to the Reader.

THE bighest Angels are most bumble Creatures; the Church of God is full of their Services, but knoweth next to nothing of their Names. Their Works praise their Lord and ours, but not Themselves. And if the Evangelical Author of this Book could have had his Will, the Churches of Christ should not have had his Name. He would have kept himself together a Benefactor, and a fort of stranger unto them.

Against his will it came to be known, that his Book of the Fulfilling of the Scriptures was his And by the Divine Providence it was made ne cessary that his latter Works should bear his Name. Obscurity was his Ambition; tho' his Gifts and Graces prove too big and too bright to be covered. And, in short, it hath pleased the Supream Ruler (and Fountain of Honour) to

honour him whether he would or no.

The Book first named, is followed with the Eulogies of greatest Divines; and is a Manna sweet to the Tast of all serious Christians. His Epifto-

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Epistolary Discourse, dedicated to the Queen's Majesty, hath been most graciously uccepted by Her; and highly valued by those that I must think of the best of her Subjects. Being, as is his Discourse of Earthquakes, a Treasure of things Old and New; Micheam's golden Jewels. Arguments, several, not so much as touched by any Pen within her Dominions, or beyond them, save Mr. Flemming's.

Nevertheless it is of this his Treatiste, that I would fay, with submission to better Judgments, There a none like it. Herein it is, that I think he hath fregularly honoured his God, and I believe his God will very fingularly honour him. For, is any Disease more Mortal, or rhore Epidemical, than Popish Implicit Faish And is there any to be named, against which we are so destitute of Medicines? Is there extent in English, or any European Language, any one Rationale of Christianity, in Method suited to them who do most need it? Hath any one Writer, beside our Author, set himself to teach Minors the primary Evidences, and reasonable Demonstrations of Christian Faith? I will con him my best thanks who shall name me so much as one.

How found and how generous a Medicine this Treatife is, let the Wife judge. I declare it to be the only one, that on no flight Enquiry, I have

have heard of. Being so, I no sooner read it, but I bleffed it, and its unknown Author. Privately and publickly I praised it, and finding it not to be had in our Shops, nor but from Holland, (if from thence) to be gotten, I presently resolved to Reprint it. Soon after, hearing who was the Author, and where he was, I fent him notice of that my fixed Resolution, whether he consented to it or no. For thus I argued; that if he were of the beavenly spirit breathing in his Book, he could not gainlay it; and if he were of another fpirit, for the Churches service, it would be innocent and praise-worthy to cross it. But blessed be God, and bleffed be he from his Lord and mine, he readily forgave me this wrong, and cheerfully I proceeded.

No Lion found I in my way; but a forry Worm I counted the Exclamations of some nice Folk, against the Phrase and Style of this confessedly excellent Work. Dutifully I compassionated the weak; and no less the many sick, of curiosity. Who have such Ulcers in their Palats, that they cannot, without cruel pain, swallow the most desirable Dainties, unless they may take them in Oil and Sugar. Cannot prevail with themselves to read Periods that require an attentive mind, and the least strain of their Understanding. Wherefore I used my Spunge, and took out as many expressions of my Author's

thor's Native Language, as I thought would disturb an English Reader. Substituting such as appeared sufficiently intelligible. Which being done, the Bookseller was wife enough to

set the Press going. I fignified my purpose to Catechise Youth publickly in the Positions and Characters of this Book, one Lords day; as in W. Assembly's Catechism, on the other, by course. Which practice other Ministers, soon told me, that they would take up. As, I trust, many more will do; forasmuch, as none can be unsensible what multitudes of men do go to Grass, on this fide the Alps, as well as on the other; and what a fantafick Faith common Protestants do rest in, as well as Romanists. Making show of a Faith, (as the Moon of a Light,) whereof not any is in Brit, is painted; the mielves rooted. Sadly it is Tain, is a Nation. Seen of all, how too too properly we are still named Brittains; the Faith of most being such a Paint, as cannot but melt and vanish in any Trial that is fiery.

Memorable are the words of the Learned unhappy Spalato; to this effect as I remember. To fay that I do not my felf know why I do believe a Religious Article, but yet I do believe it, because the Church in which I am doth believe it; it is the self-same as to say, I do not my self-spin one of my Eyes, but yet I do see the thing

thing spoken of, because the Company in which I am doth see it. The good Lord lessen among us the number of Men so Absurd, and so plainly void of Faith! He hath already made the Leaves of this Book so healing unto some, that in great hopes I commend them unto all. And especially to the Societies of Toung Men, that hold weekly stated Meetings for Edifying Conserence. In which, as I tell those of my own Charge, they stall not find more Eligible Arguments than this Book stores them with. Happy they, if, in the best sense, they do make them their own! Lord encrease holy Faith, and quench stery Fastion; so prayeth

Bridges-firet near Covent-Garden, Feb. 28. Daniel Burgess.

### POSTSCRIPT.

Nderstanding the Forreign Churches want of this Work, as well as our own, I purpose ere long to Translate, and send it forth in the Latin Tongue. Unless some good hand, of more leisure, do prevent me.

A 4

THE

#### THE

# JUDGMENT OF SOME

## London Ministers

CONCERNING THIS

# TREATISE.

Hings of unquestionable Excellence in themselves, and of greatest Importance unto our welfare, have not always the Deepest and most Constant Thoughts bestown upon them. Witness the Satisfaction of our Minds about the Matter, and about the Foundations of our Holy Christian Faith.

It seems too little observed, but it can never be sufficiently Lamented, what we do observe of Protestants neglect of the Matter of their Faith. And yet our sad Experience certifies us, that they are incomparably

more

more heedless of acquainting themselves with the Reasons thereof. We have very many that do competently know, what it is to be a Christian, for every single man that can ren-

der a Reason, why he ought to be so.

Storms do make men look to their Anchors; and we do not know, but aweful Judgments, are halfning on us, (being Remote ones do not awaken us, ) to beat us out of our inconfiderately chosen Refuges. Our Precarious and Unexamined Confidences, which in very Propriety are but Fancy, and not Faith built upon any folid Grounds. However, we mult all, needs Die; and it is more than probable, that a near Prospect of the Future State, may convincingly show the most obstinate, that the King of Terrours is not to be conquered, and no Miracles are to be wrought, by an Implicit Faith.

Prondum rits

Or by a way of Religion, that is sunter non qà taken up and walk'd in, meerly eundum eft, fed ga itur. Sen.

for Company.

Wherefore we give our great Thanks to the Author of every good Gift; who hath drawn this his richly furnished Scribe, to supply us with so very needful a Treatise as is here offered. Some of us do Prosess that in reading it, we were surprized with Joy and with Wonder, that a Topick so little Written, Discoursed,

or Thought of, should be treated on with such depth of Judgment, and with such Experience as is rarely found in the most laudable Writers.

Thro'the Divine Blessing which we implore, we hope that we, and our Brethren throughout these Nations, shall find good success of our Peoples use of this most instructive Work. For which, with the excellent Author, (who did but Consent to this Edition of it;) we are indebted unto the Reverend and Worthy Publisher, by whose means we receive it. We joyn with both of them, in Prayer to the most High, that this Rich Seed of the Sower may be made Bread of Life to the Eater:

William Bates. Mathew Mead. Thomas Cole. John Howe.

Mathew Sylvester, Daniel Williams, John Showers

THE

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#### The Author's

## PREFACE.

His small Treatise bore offered, is on the greatest Subjects that can fall under the Confideration of Mankind; and is a Study, which was never more pressingly called for, than in these days, for ma-king Peace with God, and gaining such an Assurance of his Truth, as may fully quiet and support the Soul, though all sensible Props should be broken, and fail. Great changes do surely hasten on this Generation, and the Life of Faith is in another manner like to be put to Tryal, than fince the Churches Rife and Recovery from Antichristian Bondage. The Storm now wifibly grows upon the Churches of Christ, shough nothing ought to Faint or Shake the Spirits of any, who know their Anchor is sure and cast within the Vail; but the strongest Difficulties, in following the Lord, (when overcome,) yeild the greatest Victory, and will be not only matter of foy here, but to all Exernity, in baving with Patience and Hope indured, and got well through a Throng of Temptations and Affaults in a resolute adherence to the Truth. If men think it their Wisdom to secure their Private Interest, by dividing it in such a time from the P.ublick Cause of the Reformed Church, and make Light of the greatest Truths of God now assaulted, of the Blood of the Martyrs, yea of their own Eternal State. y any ecolness or shrinking from the same; they will find

find no Temporal Motives, can ever compensate that loss and ruine which inevitably will meet such in the Isue. Yea that these Words of Mordecai to Kilber, (Eft. 4 13, 14.) Have the fame Voice, and webt . in this day. What is held forth in the following work, I may with bumble Confidence say, was under some pressure to have such clear Evidence and Quieting Persuasion of Divine Truth, as made it less easie to have my own Spirit satisfied berein, then pos-Tably it may be to others; for if it were not from that bleffed Assurance of the Lords being God, of the Revelation of Christ, and of the Glary to come, I sould not know what could be comforting, or make a ratio nal Being desireable. Some singular Ingagements I judge my self also to stand under, for patting to my Seal to the Truth and Fasthfulness of God in his Word, from many fignal Confirmations hereof in the course of my Pilgrimage, if such a poor Testimony might be of any weight. Let the Bissed Lord, gracivusly accept this small offering to him, for the laterest of his Truth, by so mean an Instrument, and give sime Fruit bereof, that may shide, and be found in the day of Christ.

I hope the Reader may find by a Perusal of the I. Chapter of what Serious Use and Intent the II. is, yea that in this day it was not Unseasonable or Incongruous to the foregoing Subject what is held forth in the III. Chapter. But Oh! it is sad and amazing to think how sew are under that weight of Religion, as once to have a Serious Inquiry on the Grounds and Reasons thereof, and to account the most special Assistances to their Faith to be the greatest Helpers of

speir Joy within time.

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For attaining a confirmed State in

# Religion,&c

#### CHAP. I.

The Primitive Confirmation in the truth of Christianity, held forth and cleared, in its continued necessity and use to this day, in seven Positions.

Polit. I. HAT nothing can be of a more sad and threatning aspect on the present state of Religion in all the Churches of Christ, than that utter estrangement, most are under, to the true grounds of Faith, and to those fundamental differences between Christianity, and every sale way, which no presended Religion can lay claim to. The reasons of the Position, are these. I. That it is too visibly manifest, how men in the world know so little of their own prosession, of any human art or science, as such who

who bear the Name of Christians. Or are so generally strangers to the Truth and firmness of the Principles thereof, for maintaining either a due Valuation, or powerful sence of the same on their Soul; so that an implicit and Traditional Profession is the only part and propriety: which most can claim in the Truth, and Doctrine they profes. II. That very rarely also is any Serious Personal Inquiry and Tryal, if there be indeed fuch a thing as an Experimental and Soul quick-ming Religion in the Earth. That can bear the expence of the most dismal and afflicting times, and bath so great a temporal Revenue, as Peace with God, an Immediate Communion with him, the Joy and Comforts of the Holy Ghos, when we are under such pressure. III. That the fur-thest account why most are under the research thest account, why most go under the name of Christians, rather than of any other form, can rise no higher than Custom and Education, that it did bespeak them from their Birth, and was the Religion of their Ancestors; yes become in that manner natural to them as the Customs and Language of their Country. Which are grounds that would determine to the very opposite Profession, if they were stated under the same circumstances, and had the same motives to be Maha-metanes, since it is sure these can found no other Affent, than is suitable to the Nature and Strength thereof. IV. That thus, it is plain the most numerous part of Visible Professours; are destirute of any desence from internal motives, and solid conviction on of the truth they profess, upon its own evidence; and there was never more cause to fear, some unusual apostacy from the very visible profession of Christ, upon any violent tryal and assault this way. When such find it more easy to render up their Religion, than to adhere to the same, under strong temptations, who yet never knew that substance, advantage, or certainty herein, as could preponderate with the want of all external motives for such a profession.

Posit. II. That thus one of the highest services of these times, for the publick good of the Church, does convincingly lye here; to have the faith of assent to the truth and doctrine of Christ, in a clear and firm certainty of the judgment, on its own evidence, more vigorously promoted and the proper means and assistances, which the Lord hath given means and affifiances, which the Lord hash given for this end, in some other manner yet improved, than seems to be at this day, for a more universal me. The grounds to intorce the necessity hereof are these; I. That it's sure wherever the Gospel is revealed to men, it comes with so full an assurance of understanding, and sufficiency of objective evidence, as can admit of no possible doubtfulness herein. Which is the credit and glory of our religion, that in no other way it doth require of our religion, that in no other way it doth require acceptance, but with the furthest conviction of widence. II. Because the express design and tendency of this bleffed revelation, is no less to found such a rational assurance in the judgment, of its truth, than to ingage the will and confent, for imbracing thereof; and though such great demonstrations for this end can only, in su genere, have a convincing influence to persuade the understanding, yet are they of such weight here, as ment to the demonstration of the Spirit of God, Digitized by GOOS they B 2

they are the greatest means to bring up mens assent to a full and quieting rest on that security to which they must trust themselves for ever, and to let them see, that this even here by the way, is assuredly full, though not yet their enjoyment. III. Because this faith of assent, should be first followed in the order of nature, as being the very first principle of conversion, to know and be sure, that God hath sent his son into the world to save finners; wherein as the Holy Ghost is not the Obj clive, but the Efficient Cause of our Faith, fo is not the internal work and Testimony, he gives on the Soul the first Testimony, but must still have respect to the revelation of the Word withour, and fuch demonstrative evidences thereof, wherewith it is revealed to the world. Nor may any ever separate, that which God hath himself so in-dissolubly joyned. IV. That there is so convin-cing a necessity and use hereof to the Church, and is a special way with respect to the youth, for a more firm laying of the groundwork of their Christian profession; and for the seed-plot of a bleffed and defirable growth amongst such in this day; that they might thus know early, something of these primary grounds and demonstrations of their faith; so also is it a study of that high importance, as I humbly judge should be of notable use for a Manuduction in the first place to Students of Divinity, before they launch forth in that vast and im-mense Ocean of the speculative part thereof; and for being at some greater advantage thus for carrying on such a confirming work in the Church in their sucure service. V. Yea of what use might this be with respect to many, who may be fore Digitized by Google baunted

haunted, with hidden and dreadful temptations to infidelity, and to weaken them in the very foundations of their faith; who are wholly unfurnished of any such grounds and arguments in their judgment to repel the same: and it is certain that to believe firmly the History of the Gospel, that God was manifested in our nature, to save man, is with respect to the object a much higher act of saith, than to believe, that he will save us; since as the one doth unspeakably more transcend all human reason than the other, so doth the Apostle thus argue from the greater to the less, Rom. 8, 32. that he who gave his own son to the death; will he not also with him give us all things?

Posir. III. That such a Confirming Work, was most specially followed in the Practice of the Primitive Times, and one of the great Ends of the Ministry of the Apostles and Evangelists, to have this Faith of Assent and Doctrinal Certainty thereof, on its proper Grounds and Exidences, deeply founded in Mens Judgment; is so clear as cannot come under Debate. I. That this way did the great Author of our Profession himself take, not only by the Authority of his Word, and the Power and Energy of Grace, but with that Convincing Evidence and Demonstration of his Truth to Mens Understanding, as might found also a firm and rational Affurance hereof. II. That for this End, he did pray the Father, Joh. 17. 21. and was so much pressed herein, that fo great an external Demonstration of the Truth of the Gospel, in the Concord and Unity of his People, might be kept clear, that the World might thus believe that he was sent of God, and have a deeper Conviction hereof wrought in them, by such an E-B 3 vidence

vidence. III. That one special Intent of the Go-spel of Luke, was for this end, Luke 1.4. That men might know not only the things themselves by a naked Relation, but the Certainty of these things, wherein they had been formerly Instructed. IV. That herein did the Ministry of Apollos so brightly shine forth, Act. 18. 28. And was then of most singular use to the Church, by that clearness of rational Conviction and demonstrative Arguments for the Truth of Christ, as the greatest gainsayers could nor withstand. V. That it's sure it was then without Exception expresly required of the meanest within the Church, to be always ready to render the Reasons of their Hope to all who asked: and not only to know what they did Believe, but why they did so, as is clear, 1 Pet. 3. 15. This could not be by bringing forth of internal Evidences, for Conviction of others, but by giving them an account of the most cogent grounds and demonstrations of the Gospel, as might be most prevalent, and confirming to the weak, and leave others inexcusable; and seems to have been then specially pressed in these Primitive Times, as a proper Test of their Christian Profession. VI. And we see herein also, how much these excellent Bereans were taken up, and were so highly commended of the Holy Ghost, Act. 17. 11. To know the demonstrative part of Christianity, and by its own evidence, with that intire harmony and consent of the Scripture therein, and their being thus diligently intent in that comparing-work of Religion, to see the truth thereof not singly and apart by themselves alone, but in that joynt-union & coherence wherein they stand, each in their own room, for confirming and

and giving light to other. VII. That this was the way also, wherein the Gospel did come to the Gentile Church is clearly shewed I Thess. I. 5. Not in Word only, but as in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, so also in much Assurance of Understanding, upon its own Evidence, which was that way, it did so wonderfully prevail over the world against nature, and the stream of flesh and blood, that stood in the furthest opposition thereto. VIII. That one of the greatest services of the Apostles in their visiting the Churches, did expressly lie here, Acts 14, 22. To confirm the fouls of the Disciples in the first place in the certainty of their faith, and then in exhorting them to continue in the same, so as they might follow the Lord, with the furthest light and assurance of Mind, amount the great Tryals of such a time.

IX. That it's this way also the World is rendred inexcusable for their misbelies of the Gospel, when under such sufficiency of means given for this end, by so great a discovery of the confirming evidences of its rruth, so as they can have no pretence herein, but an obstinacy and resolution not to be convinced; on which ground doth our Bleffed Lord testify, that it was no want of light, upon the certainty of his truth, why men did not receive it, but that they loved darkness better than light, because their deeds were evil; and when such clear, rational, and convincing evidences are laid open to their view; how most men possibly can get these put by or rejected, is not easy to comprehend, but that a real Irritation and torment of Spirit, from such clearness of evidence, doth thus more tend to harden than convince:

Posit. IV. That there is a continued necessity of such a Confirmation in the Faith to this day, what

ever can be objected of so long a consent and prescrip-tion of time in the protession thereof, is fully demon-strable on these grounds. I. Because it is sure, the Christian faith doth still need these assistances and it is a strange mistake, that only for Heathers and Atheists, such confirming evidences of the same should be proposed, but not for any under a visible profession, where the whole of Divinity, and Doctrine of our Faith, is fo full of demonstrative arguments, for the daily use of the most established Christians in their passage through time. IL That as the highest motives to all serious godlines and the moral duties of Christian nity must needs be from its known certainty to us, so is the continued use thereof to be still the same, III. That these numerous tryals and conflicts of Christians now, do no less call for some higher establishment in the truth on which they must alone rest when all visible props fail in their judgments, than of supporting grace; nor is it conceivable how men can this day walk in the light of any true joy and comfort, without a more folid affurance of their being on fafe grounds herein than most seem to reckon. IV. Because the revelation of the Gospel, and of an IV. Because the revelation of the Gospel, and of an eternal state in another world, is so great and wonderful, as it's strange how this is not the highest interest of mens life, to have their faith more deeply confirmed on the surthest tryal of their security now by the way herein, who must shortly make so great a tryal thereof at death; for if we were but once come thus far as to ask our own Soul what the Christians Faith indeed is, that we are thus called to believe, it could not possibly but beget some extasse of wondering at the greatness thereof, and to seekon any light and implicit assent to the same as a degree both

both of Atheism and Indisferency in this matter. V. Though there be no conflict with Heathens, as in the first times, yet was such a spirit never at a higher pitch than it is now to take off all firm affent to the greatest principles of truth, when Atheism seems to be at its last attempt in the world, and we are fallen in so amazing an hour of the power of darkness as makes these latter times more remarkably perillous and trying than the first. VI. Yea if such a confirming work, be one of the greatest means to advance the repute and honour of Religion, when its wonted awe and veneration is so far loss, and to awake men to deeper impressions of its truth, when so few seem now under any such weight; then it is certain there was never more need of the same than in this day.

Posit. V. That such a Service to the Church, doth not only respect the more knowing, inquisitive, and judicious part thereof, but the meanest Professours of Religion also, of whom this is necessarily required, is Evident on these grounds. I. Because each Christian should have undoubtedly such a ballast on their own Soul, of the folid and rational Grounds of their Faith, as well as those of greater parts and Endowments: the promoting of which were it more deeply considered, I dare humbly adventure to say would be found one of the choicest means to promote Christianity this day. II. Because this is not to drive any to doubt or question the least sincere degree of affent, though it be not with such strength of evidence as in others, nor can by that formal argumentation give the same account thereof; since a few grounds this way may specially help to some solid conviction econfirming of their mind, when they may be igno-

rant of many other cogent arguments for this end; but tis certain also the greater clearness of evidence doth still in the appointed way of means lead in to a more firm and strong affent of the judgment, to the truth of our Religion. III. Because the strength of the foundation in it felf cannot be enough if it be not with such a known evidence, as men may build firmly and with affurance thereon Nor hath the Lord thus only defigned to give his people an infallible and fure testimony to adventure on, but that it should be made sure also to them. IV. Because none can in truth fay that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoft, 1 Cor. 22. 3. by which is not to be understood so much the necessity of supernatural grace, for a faving faith, but that none can give a true affent and confession of the same, but from these grounds and arguments which are revealed by the Holy Ghost unto men for this end; and as it's certain that these Characters & evidence of Divinity, which are imprinted on the whole revelation of the Gospel, may be clear and demonstrative to our judgment, so are they as truly divine, as the doctrine which is confirmed thereby. V. Because there can be no possible cause for Unbelief of the truth from any intricate obscureness of the same, when the Lord hath given such great affiftances to our faith to be as milk for babes as well as meat to ftrong men. And though it be objected that the furthest objective evidence of the Gospel, with so clear and strong a conveyance thereof, is yet so little operative on most; the same might be faid also of the whole letter of the Scripture; but the this tends not in the least to resolve our Religion into any meer exercise of reason, and leaves the whole work of the Spirit, in its energy and operati-

operation therewith on mens souls, intire; yet doth it fully evince such a sufficiency of evidence with the Christian faith, as makes any doubtfulness herein simply impossible, through want of the greatest advantage of means; yea such as are of another kind than to induce only a probable persuasion of the ame, VI. Because it is one of the saddest Symptoms of the present State of Religion, that so few almost in whole Congregations can give any clear Affent to the Truth and Cerramy thereof, but to Amazement both live and die Strangers to the same, yea how many of these who are otherwise Serious in Religion, yet have their Faith Starved this way, and are destitute of any such support; but as it is not the numerousness of Professours, but the Strength and solidity of their Fanh, wherein the Churches Strength most lies, and hath more flourished in a few fuch to beget a greater Awe and Veneration of Religion amongst Med, than at other times in the greatest Multitude; so is it the Glory of Divine Truth, that it can subsist by its own proper Evidence, and preserve its Station in the worst of times, when all External Arguments do most visibly cease.

Posit. VI. That it's fully demonstrable and clear, how no simple instructing of men in the general Principles of Religion, can be the proper and adequate means for such a Faith of Assent to the Truth thereof, on its own Evidence, or answer that Apostolick Pattern of laying the Foundation, Heb. 6.2. But that some special Duties else are called for to so bigh an end; such wherein not only that true Primitive Confirmation in the Christian Faith might have some Practical use, but we might also Hope therewith, for a more remarkable out-letting of Confirming Influences of the Spirit

Spirit of God. What is to be understood herein I

shall humbly offer in a few particulars,

I. That it is one of the greatest concerns of the Ministerial Work, and of the Key of Doctrine, to have all who hear the Gospel, in the first place pressed to take Religion so far to Heart, as to make a serious inquiry into the Grounds and Reasons hereof, and thus to know their being on sure ground herein, not because they know not another way, but because they know this is the alone way of Truth, to which they dare trust their Immortal Souls. II. That for this End the Supream Truths of Relion be represented with that certainty of Evidence, and Demonstration, as both such great and marvel-lous things do require, and the temper of such a gain-saying Age now calls for; and to have this pressed more on mens Judgment and Conscience, that the things of God, which are of the highest Consequence, Reality and Substance, can have no possible Reception by any implicite or probable belief thereof, nor can admit any pretence for the same, when the Lord hath given such kind of Proofs and Evidence, as leaves mens darkness herein without any shaddow of excuse.

II. That it peculiarly belongs to the Catechetical Work of Religion, to take some account of the meanest Professours thereof, and with a special respect to the Youth; of their Faith of Affent to the Doctrine of Christ, on what grounds and certainty of evidence this is founded, and for their instructing therein, as well as in the general Principles of Religion; when one of the most ruiningthings to the Church lies here, that the Profession of most is laid in so deep an Igmorance, as they have almost nothing to say for the fame,

same, but a naked Affirmation. I know the dissiculty hereof for the weak may be objected, but without just cause; since as the Prime Truths of Religion are sew, easie and plain for the meanest Capacity, so also are the Primary Evidences and Demonstrations of our Faith, is such once with that desire did search after the same, as for a hidden and invaluable Treasure; wherein this respect should be still had, to difference betwixt what is Initial and of a more fundamental concern for the weak, and what may tend to an higher growth and increase of others.

III. It should be of greatest use and advantage also for the same end, that the young growth now coming up in the Church, were put to give some ex-plicit Evidence of their Consent and Choice of the Profession of Christ, so far as may witness a Ratisfication of the Bapisimal Covenant, now as their own proper Deed, wherein they were implicitely ingaged in their Infancy. Some special Grounds and Reasons for this, are; I. Because God will have his Service freely entred in and upon choice, as that way which is most agreeable to his Honour; for as the Covenant binds mutually, so do the Seals thereof also, and therefore upon our part is Baptism a Sacramental Oath of Allegiance to God. II. Because it tends to a more resolute and firm adherence to the Service of God, that this bufiness should be personally brought home to Mens Conscience, especially before their first admittance to the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, and thus to ingage them as Joshua did, Chap. 24. 22. Te are witnesses against your selves berein, and they said, We are witnesses. III. Because this is expresly held forth 1 Pet. 3: 21. where Bap-

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ifm is called the answer of a good conscience toward rod, upon this ground, that such then who were come o years of knowledge, were personally brought to onfirm by their own confent that folemnIngagement nd Dedication by Baptism to be the Lords, and thereore it is called empairmum, which is vox juris, and gnifies, sponsto, & stipulatio publica inter Christiaum, & Dominum Christum, as the most Judicious commentators on that Scripture do clearly render it; nd so this was a special part of the Primitive Pratice, not only with respect to such, who were converted from Heathenism, but were born withthe Church, and Partakers of that Seal of Baptifine their Infancy, to bring them to answer to that reat Demand of the Covenant, Do you now Connt upon Evidence and Choice, to be the Lords, and be a Subject of his Kingdom, and embrace the aws thereof, and do you thus in Sincerity and ruth declare the same wherein you have a good onscience before God? And of what bleffed Fruit ad Advantage should this be both for the Increase nd Honour of the Gospel, if this were more deepr taken to Heart for some Practical use, according the Rule, and Primitive Pattern in the Churches f Christ?

IV. It were specially desirable also, that there be ome clear view and summary by it self, of the most gent Grounds and Demonstrations of the Christian aith, with respect both to the Dostrinal, Historial, and Prophetical part thereof, and in that maner accommodated, as the meanest within the hurch might have such a help still at their hand, and thus with the least expence of time, be provied of such Arguments and Reasons, as should tend (through

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(through the Blessing of God) not only to the furthest rational Assent, and Certainty of the Truth of their Profession, but to give a most special support of Mind against that inward Tryal of Satans Temptations and Fiery Darts this way; yea is such a mean, that in the serious Improvement hereof by baving such Evidences once brought in on Mens Judgment and Conscience, so as to see with their own Eyes the Truth of the same, I must humbly judge, there is nothing, next to the internal work of the Spirit, of this kind, might tend more to pro-

mote the Kingdom of Christ in this day.

Post, VU. That as there are some more signal Periodsof time, to which a greater brightness and increase of Light hath respect under the New Testament; so doth there now feem to be some remarkable Call and Excitement, to such a Confirming Work, is this day about the Christian Faith; when we may hope that a more so. 'lemn and restoring time of Religion in the World, is on a near approach, (though all sensible evidence would feem to controll this) and may be now more looked after, and prepared for, under a suitable impression of these Grounds for the same. I. That the promised time of the Conversion of the Jews doth assuredly draw near; and whatever be judged by some of the Lords immediate Appearance herein by a Minimal in the conversion of the same is in a special and the same in the control of the same in the sa ratle, yet is it unquestionable that nothing in the way of means could be more promising and hopeful. to promote this great end, than by promoting fo great a Service as this for the Christian Church, II. That a greater extent also of the Profession of Christ amongst the Gentiles, and rending of the Vail that is now over many dark Nations, seemeth clearly injured therewith; and what a hopeful Euidence

vidence should this be if such a Publick and Catholick Spirit were more seen, how to advance the highest Ends of Religion on such an account without respect to any partial or divided Interest? Yea that this blest Zeal of God might in that manner appear to have the dark World get a more clear and convincing prospect of the bighest rational Demonfirations of Christianity, as might through the Lords Gracious Concurrence bring men once to an Inquisitive and Serious Spirit about the same. Oh that such may be raised up in this dismal hour with fomething of that ancient Spirit, to travel with defire for the Salvation of Mankind, and of whom it may be said, as of blest Nebemiah, these are indeed come to seek the welfare of their People, in their greatest Interest. III. And this farther excitement we are now under for this end, in a time when Popery seems to be upon one of its last and greatest Assaults against the Church; fince it's so clear that what ever tends to Confirm Men in Christianity from their own Tryal and Inquiry upon the Confirming Evidences thereof, must have the same Native result, to make such Confirmed Protestants; yea nothing is more demonstrable than that the Method and Grounds that are taken both to ingage and fix men in the Popish Profession, have the same rational Tendency to promote Atheism, and to give Infidels the greatest Advantage to reject the Profesfion of Chrift. He that bath Ears to bear, let bim bear. Amen.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

The Confirming Work of Religion, reduced to Practical Use; in some clear view of those Primary Grounds, and Demonstrations of our Faith, which mone should pretend Ignorance of, who enter the Profession of Christ upon choice, and Certainty of Evidence.

# SECTION L

Qu. I. WHat Reasons, and Demonstrations, can you give for so great a Faith as that of the Glorious Being of God, who is invisible to humane Sense; since this is the Foun-

dation of all Religion?

Anf. Though this is Principally founded on the Sacred Truth and Authority of his own Word, yet I am with the furthest Infallible Evidence confirmed herein; I. That it can be no more fure, that this marvellous frame of the Heavens and Earth hath a being, and is the Object of our Sense, than that a Supream Infinite Wisdom and Power must be the first cause hereof, and it were simply impossible it could ever otherwise have been. U. That he hath thus made himself Visible to our Eyes, by such a vifible World, and in so exquisite an Order and Correspondence to support the same, as nothing stands alone by it self, but in a line of mutual respect, which runs through the whole Creation. as clearly thus see, that God is, as that there is an invilible Soul in a living Body. III. That this Harmony is amongst things, in their own Nature

fo Contrary and Destructive to other, for to hold this wonderful frame, as all must abandon Reason, or fee an infinitely wife Conduct herein; and no need of Extraordinary Miracles, to Confirm what the whole Constitutions of Nature do Witness, IV. That this rare frame of man could never have come in being, but by him who could Unite such different Substances as a Material Body, and an Immaterial Soul, in so near and marvellous an Union. V. That there is such an universal Consent of Mankind in all Ages there to, as shews Religion to be founded in the very Nature of Man, and as Effential to his Being, as his Reason is, yea that the ultimate difference of Man from the Beaft, and most effential Property of humane Nature lies here. VI. That though every one be an Enemy to what torments him; yet it was never possible for an Atheilt to free himself from that unavoidable Sense and Fear of a Desty; nor, in a World so much lost in Wickedness, could he ever extinguish the awe of Religion, or make any rational Opposition to this greatest Article of the common Faith of Mankind. VII. That the Reason of the whole Constitution of Nature, and vicisitude of things here, is so great, as, without shutting out the use of Reason, we cannot but see, how nothing possibly could have been better; and that any want hereof in the whole frame of the Universe, would be as the Diffecation of a joynt of the Body, and were not conceivable to be otherwise than it is by Insinite Wisdom appointed. VIII. That it's simply impossible that God Bleffed or ever should not exist, or that this Universe, which is a work so highly becoming the greatness of its Maker ) could possibly subsist for one hour or minute

minute of time, without a Supream Independent Power and Being, on which all Visible Beings have their Dependance, fince they cannot depend upon nothing. IX. That such is the absolute necessity of the Faith also of a God-Head, as without this the state of Mankind could not morally subsist, or any possible Order, Subjection, Piety, and Justice, be to support Human Society, but as Bradwardine faith, O quam necesse est bunc esse, quem impossibile est non esse. X. How plain is it, that men cannot but see these effects of his Power on the Conscience, in the Certainty of a Prophetick Light and Discovery as hath been oft given of Future things, and in the undeni-able Truth of Miracles, so as such a Producy as a profest Atheif, can have no claim to humane Race, as a rational Being, more than the greatest monster in Nature to be a true man.

Qu. Il. What doth witness the Worlds not being Eternal, and its first Original and Beginning from God, to Consirm your Faith herein, by rational De-

monstration?

Anf. I. That Eternity is an Incommunicable Perfection of the first Cause, and that which is made up of corruptible and perishing things, as this Visible World cannot possibly be in it self Eternal; nor could ever produce it self, since thus it must both be and not be at the same time, which is the greatest Contradiction. II. That is there be such a thing now as time, there can be no judging of Days, Years and Ages to be Infinite, or how one thing in a continued order, should thus go before another, without coming to some first beginning. III. If there be a gradual Increase of human Learning on the Earth, and a further discovery of

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Arts and Sciences, and the greatest Experiments and Inventions have been but of a late Rife and Date; then can there not possibly be an Eternal Succession of Mankind, with a continued Progress and Experience this way; nor can it be that but of late one part of the World is known and discovered to another. W. That so short an History as we have in the most Ancient Records of time, were wholly Inconfiftent with fuch an Eternal Duration or that Infinite Ages preceding should leave no remembrance to Posterity, when so small a measure of time, as a few thousand years, have left to much. V. Nor could men beget men Eternally without going back to some first man, who could not beget himself. VI. That if Eternity be preferable to time, then should not the excellentest being in the Earth, Man, be thus corruptible, and only this in-animate Mass of the Earth Eternal. VII. That infinite Ages past, though they should have but multi-plied the race of man in an Age, to two or three more, should have come to that at last, that the whole Precinct of the Earth could not possibly bear the product of such an infinite Increase; and no Wars or extraordinary Judgments were ever yet known to be such, as to restrain such an unavoidable growth.

Qu. III. What infallible Evidence to Reason is there of a Supream Providence, both in the Conservation, and Government of the World; for Con-

firming your Faith of the Scripture berein?

Anj. I. That it is clear the support of this great frame of the Universe, with that continued and regular course of nature herein, is as simply impossible without an infinite Divine Power, as its first Being and Creation. II. That such an extent of

Providence as respects so innumerable Objects, with fuch a Contrariety both of Qualities and Passions in the same, must needs be from an Infinite and Intelligent Cause. III. That all things to this day, continue in that established Order of second Causes, wherein God hath placed them by a Law so Visibly Imprinted on the Nature of things without Reason, that they do as exactly answer the same in their proper Course and Station, as if they had a rational Knowledg of their Duty. IV. That Universal respect, the Sun in the Firmament hath to things here below, though at fo great a distance, which doth neither cease, or grow weary to send forth its beams and bidden influences to the meanest Creatures, may let us clearly see, how it hath the same Visible Use and End to Confirm an Incomprehensible and Infinite Providence about the meanest things, as well as the greateft. V. That immediate Precedency of the Soul in that leffer World of Man, bears the same Evidence therewith; which though we never saw with our eyes, yet doth underiably actuare the whole body in its Functions, as the proper Spring of every act and Motion there. VI. It is thus further confirmed, by these continued vicissitudes and turns of Summer and Winter, and of day and night, that man might have, both Light for his Labour, and Darkness as a covering for his Rest. VII. By such Visible Discoveries of Disume Judgment, and Execution of his Laws on men here, as all may see his Hand therein, who yet will not hear his Voice in the Word. VIII. By these extraordinary and wonderful Works of Providence, which have been in all Ages. IX. By so evident a sestraint both over Devils, and wicked Men without which they would quickly disturb the whole frame C 3

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of

of this Earth, and make it uninhabitable for Human Society; if their being thus Bounded and Chained, were not as Visible, as the Certainty of their Being. X. By such a Natural Obligation to Moral Duties, with the Sence of a difference betwixt good and evil, as is founded in the very rational Nature of Man, that none can possibly root out, even where the Scripture is not known. XI. By that Natural Considence also in God, which all Men have, and recourse to him on any present extream hazard, to Witness not only that the most High bears Rule in the Kingdoms of men, but that the Sence and Evidence hereof is unavoidable.

Qu. IV. But doth this great Administration of Providence, about human Affairs as unchangeably appear, in a differencing between the Righteous and the Wicked, by some Recompence to the One, and Punishment to the Other, as in the aftablished course of Nature?

Ans. It is certain that such as desire a Confirming of their Faith herein, want it not, with the surthest Evidence, but may ever see that exact Conformity in the whole Dispensation of Providence, to the Rectitude and Persection of the Divine Nature, and how a firm belief that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that Diligently seek him, is one and the same Faith; when we cannot but see, I. That natural sense of good and evil, and essential difference betwixt the same, which is so firmly founded in the Reason of all Mankind, as no human Laws or Custom could ever take this off their Conscience, or make an indifference herein, without extinguishing the very Nature of Man; to shew that Eternal and Unchangeable difference, which

the Holy Nature of God hath put betwirt them? II. That we see the worst of Men so constrain'd to an awful Sense and Regard of Truth and weldeing, and to acknowledge the Lovelines and Excellency hereof, as does make them feek their own repute by a falle shew and counterfeit of the same; and gives such a Being and Rise to that dreadful Imposture of Hypocrifie. III, That it's the Truebs Priviledge ever to outlive Falfbood, and prevail ver the same, yea to have the greater Triumph after its forest Conflicts, and how this is of as fundamental a Conftitution in the course of Providence, as the most firm Establishment of Nature. IV. That in no time fince man was formed in the Earth, doth true Joy and Serenity of Mind, cease to be the Native refult of welldoing, or the Fruit of Righteousness to be Peace and Assurance of Mind, nor hath it ever wanted a Witness, even before any Word given of the Lords taking Pleasure herein. V. That it's so evident, in the most dismal times, what a publick Bleffing such are, who by more extraordinary Tryals have been put to the highest Exercise of their Grace and Patience, yea how Visibly such have been promoted to the most honourable Service for God, and to advance the Credit of Religion before Men, who on the first fight and view have been accounted the most miserable of any. VI. Whilst, on the other hand, it may be ever seen, how with the greatest Prospersty of the wicked here, there are Punghments of another kind Dispensed, and more dreadful than any outward Affliction, fuch as judicial Obstimacy, and Blindness of Mind in Opposition to God, even when their own ruine is made Visible to them herein. VIL How oft men are thus evidently

dently condemned to be happy in this World by some strange measure of Temporal Success and Profperity, before some great Fall and Ruine, as the Iffue hereof in the last scene of Providence, doth fully attest. VIII. That it's seen also, how Sin doth ever bring its own Panishment with it, in some begun Degree both of Shame and Torment; and, as Seneca, an Heathen, could say, That Wickedness was the most exquisite Contriver of human-Misery, so the World likewise may see how a present immunity from Judgment is no release, but when its Sentence is not speedily Executed, yet is it at last surely executed. IX. And how evident is it, that the greatest haters of Godliness are yet inforced to justi-Se the same and the Christians choice herein, as the greatest Wisdom, upon any surprizing State and Extremity; yea how such would be glad to joyn Interests then with such in their Death, whom they most contemned in their Life.

Qu. V. How is it Convincing and Demonstrable, that God hath given any clear and express Révelation of his Will and Counsel unto Men, and that such a wonderful Record is undoubtedly extant in the World.

Anf. That, I. It is not possible to believe the Being of God, and not also the Truth of an established Law, and Rule of Commerce betwixt him and man here, so as to know both what we should do, and what we should Expect and Hope from him. II. That this also must be known and display its Power and Essicacy to the World, in that manner, and by such infallible Evidence of its Truth, as may render all inexcusable, who give not intire Credit thereto. III, I can be no more clear and assured that there

is but one Sun in the Firmament, than that there but one Fountain, and Repository of Sacred Light abo Religion, which is the Scripture, and its being t alone publick Standard of truth to the whole Wor JV. That no way was ever made known to rec ver mankind from a state of Bondage, Darkne and Milery, confistent with the very use of rease but by this bleffed light which shineth there. V. Y that there is as visible a difference, betwixt t same and any pretended Religion which ever v besides in the World, as there is betwint day a night, which is founded in the immutable nature these things in themselves. VI. That there is c proper Sphere, where this glorious Light of Divi Truth is fixed, and wherein it shines forth fre one Age to another; which is the Christian Church.

Qu. VI. But uphat more peculiar evidences a you show of the Divinity of the Scriptures, that

may foe them to be of infallible truth?

Auf. I. That it's fure such a book is this day the Earth, which no created wisdom could ever he made, and contains such things of highest conce to mankind, as does infinitely exceed the bounds human ability and invention, and could never he been discovered but by God himself. II. That gives forth such exquisite laws and constitutions our religion, as men must needs see the boly nata parity, and perfection of God, most brightly shint forth therein. III. Which doth discover so grand proper a relief for all those evils and miseries to do attend this fallen estate of man, as none but all-sufficient God could work. IV. That he also must be the author of this blessed record, we

sules the World, and hath determined the changes and revolutions thereof, when it is not more evident that these visible Heavens are stretched forth over the Earth, than that this Line of the Scripture is stretched over the whole Work and Frame of Providence, and doth most clearly and brightly illuproduct of Infinite Wildom, that so great a variety of matter should meet with so visible a concent and harmony in one perfect and intire frame; yea knit in so close a bond of union together, as makes the whole Bible to be intirely one piece; though in the writing of each distinct part thereof it could never have possibly been contrived or foreseen by human wildom, as we see here, of so admirable an agreement and correspondence, as is in all the parts thereof. VI. That none else could have spoke to the World, in fo Majestick a way, and so becoming the greatness and soveraignty of God, to assume fuch a supremacy, and give forth Laws for abso-lute obedience from all Mankind thereto, and on such a penalty of eternal destruction; or that any impostors, either possibly could, or durst have, in such a manner, personated the same, VII. That it must needshe his word who perfectly knows what is in man, and bath an absolute authority over the Soul, and is a discerner of the thoughts thereof, who thus not only gives law to the Conscience, and our inward parts, but doth establish an internal Religion there, no less absolutely, than what respects our external work and actions. where all may see the Penmen thereof under so intire a subjection to the doctrine which they taught, and that it is no contrivance of their own,

se they did record their own failings, and imperfections, in behalf of the truth; and did thus also require all just respect and obedience to Magistrates, when through the whole Earth they were then greatest Enemies to the Truth of the Gospel. IX. That this must be his Word, who alone can derive principles of life to his own institutions, and animate the same with a quickening Spirit; and is a work above the contrivance of Angels or Men, when directed to each new trial of the Church, and personal case of Christians, as though it had been alone written for that time; so that I can be no more persuaded in reason that there is such a Book as the Bible in the Earth, than that it came from Heaven, and is the alone rule of Religion, and of Divine Revelation, for the governing of Mankind.

Qu. VII. How is the secure conveyance of the Scripture demonstrable amidst all the changes of times past, and that there could be no possible tendency to its

corruption?

Anjav. I. That it's so undeniably the first rule which ever was given to mankind about Religion; and the alone publick standard of Truth, that hath, endured the trial and inquiry of all times past, so as no pretences in the matter of Antiquity could yet ever be to the contrary. II. That there is so exact an Harmony betwixt the Old and New Testament; as the one is a visible transcript of the other, in its accomplishment; that I can be no more sure of such a venerable record as the Old Testament, and its unalterable conveyance to the Church, to which the whole race of the Jews is yet a standing witness, than how it is continued and perfected in the revelation

lation of the Gospel, and but one intire frame. III. That its deliverance was by no private deed, but by a publick trust to the whole Universal Church; so as it were more easie in the way of reason to question the most fundamental statutes and laws of any Nation, by which mens private. sight and property is secured, than the truth hereof. IV. That under the Gospel it hath been so fully dispersed over the World, and in such various languages; that an innumerable company of Chrifisans these 1600 years past, have been as common living Books of the same. V. That these numerous Versions and Commentaries written thereon in diverse Languages, do fully evidence they had the same Scripture, and no other than what we have this day, VI, That this was delivered to the Church not only in writing, but in that form of found words, for keeping close thereto, as could admit of no possible tendency to corrupt or alter the same; besides the continued and publick reference that hath been fince the first Ages of the Gospel to its decision, which all these sharp controversies, that have been in the Church on all sides, do inevitably require.

Qu. VIII. What doth confirm the fall of man, and entry of sin into the World, this way, from clear and

unavoidable evidences of reason?

Anju. I. That there is such a thing as sin and evil in the World, with the sence and conscience of guilt arising bereon, amongst all mankind, can need no proof nor evidence. II. That it is simply impossible this should have been originally created with man, or effentially belonging to his first frame and constitution, since then there could be no conscience of

of guilt or remerfe, for what was given to be a part of himself, in his first frame; nor could it be any sin, to act thus suitably to their own original state. III. That it were not conceiveable also how one part of man should be in such opposition to another. IV. Nor that such a thing as inherent shame could be in the nature of man, upon the sense of guilt, and by so natural a result follow the same, or that such should be ashamed of any part of his own being, if this were not upon an undoubted apostacy from what once he was, and that inevitable conviction of Conscience that he now is what he ought not to be, so as the certainty of Mans Fall though alone revealed in the Scripture, as to the true cause thereof, yet may be as evident to reason, as the truth of his being now is.

### SECTION U.

Qu. I. A RE there such assistances to the Christian an Faith super that great and association of the Revelation of Christ to the World as can fully answer the greatness thereof from clear and

infallible evidence to Mens Judgments?

Anjan. It is fure there could nothing possibly be desired more to satisfie the most doubtful and suspicious mind than is given for the surthest certainty hereof. I. That such a glorieus person as the Messiab was to come, and be anomited to that great work of redeeming mankind from sin and milery, and bring man back again unto God; and that this promise is the alone soundation, whereon the shureb was sounded since man fell. II. That all the numerous types and sacrifices under the Law, did so expressly tend to consirm their Faith of that

one bleffed Propitiatory Sacrifice which was to be offered up. III. That long ere the New Test ament was written, there was to clear and exact a protraicture of the Messas drawn forth in the Old, with fuch peculiar marks whereby he should be known to the church, and infallibly take place in the event, as men could not upon any Scripture evidence expect his coming in another way. IV. That his bumiliation and sufferings were so expresly held forth and foretold, with the peculiar circumstances thereof, in the 53. chap. of Ifaiah, and 9. of Daniel, as it they had been Eye witnesses of the accomplishment thereof. V. That even the special feafon and period of time for accomplishing this great promise was so far made known, as upon diligent search and inquiry, its near approach might be discornable and clear to what, or what manner of time this did specially relate; for which both the Fall of the Monarchies, and Daviels seventy weeks were set up as High-way marks to guide mens Faith herein. VI. That it's simply impossible according to the Scripture, how the premised Messias could be yet to come, except the Jews were put in the same flate they were in at his coming, when now for these 1600. Years there bath been no Scepter, nor Lawgiver, no Temple, or daily Sacrifice. VII: That this great mystery could never possibly have entred in our thoughts, or be devised by any created understanding.

Qu. II. But are there as clear and infallible evidences of the truth of this great promise in the event, that sarely the hiessed McClius of the World is now come, as thus it is sure he was premised?

Anfw. It's beyond all possible debate, I. That fo Divine and Wonderful a Person was in the days of Tiberius Cafer manifested to Ifrael, with no outward shew or observation; who did so great and marvellous things, before all the people, as were above all created power, yea, that he was Crucified at Jerusalem, under Pontine Pilate, is a truth in the matter of fact, that both Jews and Heathers have been enforced to confess it. II. That this special season of his coming into the World is the great Epo-Church, hath ever fince to this day reckoned her state and fuccession, is undoubted and clear also. III. That the time of his appearance unto the World, did fo exactly fuit that which was foretold by the Prophets, that the Jowish Church was at that time With greatest intentness looking after the Mellias; so as some remarkable Impostors took occasion from hence to deceive the People herein. IV. That in him who was then revealed, and whom the Christian Church worships, it's sure, was most exactly fulfilled, what ever was foretold, concerning the Messias in the Old Testament; and we do appeal herein to these Records which all the Jews even to this day do acknowledge to be Divine. V. That this was not done in a corner, but in the publick view of men in those days, most known to all and famous; yea by the special appointment of God at so solemn a time of the Passover in Jerusalem, where Christ our Passover was then Sacrificed. VI. That no humane interest or policy could possibly be in this discovery of the Gospel; when nothing could have been more visibly cross thereto or obstructive of its success, than such a publishing of the death and suffer-

fufferings of our Lird, with all the ignomity and abasement which attended the same, had there been any way here to consult Carnal Reason, or any other ground to bear it out than the evidence and certainty of its truth. VII. That herein have all divided parties and sells in the Christian World been enforced still to meet and consent, in an acknowledgement of the substance thereof. VIII. That in the same light which was held forth in the Old Testament about the Messas, did the whole Gentile Church enter; and made claim to their sight for being adopted the Seed and Children of Abraham, on these clear and express Promises given for the same; which the Jews could not but confess to be of Divine Authority.

Qu. III. What confirmation is it to the Christian Faith, that the coming of the Massias should be defer-

red for 4000. Years after the Promise?

Answ. Though the soveraign pleasure of God should silence and satisfie our mind herein; yet is there such a sight to be had hereof, and of infinite Divine Wisdom shining forth in the same as should be most consirming for these ends. I. That there might be a more distinct representing of the glory of this Mistery to Angels and Man, in such a gradual opening up of the same. II. To put that weight and high value on his own Promise and Testimony herein, when on the alone credit thereof, he would thus both try, and bear out the Faith of his Church, for so many Ages, and draw forth their desires and longings in all that long space of time after the same. III. To testifie the greatness of his wrath against Sin and the Apostacy of mankind, by suffering the generality thereof to lye so long under

under its fatal effects. IV. To prepare the Church for so great a reception, by all that long preparatory fervice of legal institutions, it highly becoming the greatness of this mystery, to have so solemn and wondrous an introduction thereto. V. That thus the World might have its full trial of the insufficiency of natural abilities, and of any improvements of humane Wildom and Learning, for help; after this had first been at the furthest height both in Greece and Rome, before the alone Redeemer of the Church came.

Qu. IV. What can offer furthest conviction to the World, of the Truth of Christianity from its nature and internal excellencies; and that it is no less essentially good in its self, than evidently true?

Answ. I. It is undeniable even to those that live at a distance, that such is the truth of Christ, that though all visible and humane props should fail, it can subsist by its own evidence, and authority over Mens Consciences; and hath thus ever preferved its station in the worst of times. II. That as it holds forth the most exquisite rule of perfection to follow, so doth it bring the greatest relief to the distempers of the mind, and those miseries which attend the humane state here; so that a higher glory doth thus result to the Holy God, by this dispensation of Grace to fallen Man than if he had stood in his Primitive state. III. That it is sure the Truth and Doctrine of Christ doth natively tend to fix men in a state of light and Communion with God, and in a State of Separation in their Principles, Affection, and Conversation from the World. IV. That it doth more brightly shine forth in simplicity, and truth and in its inter-

nal and wital ada, than in any outward form or show: Yea in the way of self-denial, meekness, and poverty of spirit, doth such an excellency appear, as in its own nature, hath as visible a difference from the proud and vindictive spirit of this World, as the day hath from the night. V. That such Chriftianity, can be known, by no naked doctrinal difcovery of the same to mens judgment, or such rules as any humane science is acquired by, without an inward power, and principles of a new life 3 nor can there ever be a right knowledge of Divinizy, until it be first ingrafted in a Divine Heart. So far is this mystery above all humane rule, and contrivance. VI. That it is stated in the greatest opposition to any false show or bypocrify; yea, brings such inforcements therewith of candor, and truth, and of love, tenderness and sympathy towards others, as all must see is not only the highest ornament and persection of our nature, but the greatest blessing to she World that ever was known. VII. That such a native luftre and fragrancy doth attend the truth, and simplicity of the Gospel, as makes it no more posfible for humane art or cunning to represent this, than to make the dead image of a manto live, or to paint on a board the vital scent of a Violet or Rose, to our Senses. VIII. That in this way of the Gospels subduing Men to the Obedience thereof, by the power of inward Grace, the Glory of Christ doth more eminently shine forth, than if he had appeared for this end with the greatest outward majesty and attendance of Angels to our Bodily Eyes. IX. That it is visible that the whole World befides, that is without the revelation of Christ, is a place where horrour, falsehood, and impiety do manifeltly reign. Qu. V.

Qu. V. But how do you receive so wonderfull a truth, as that of the Gospel is, when it's now so great

a distance of time from its first promulgation.

Ans. 1. That we can be no more fure and perswaded of the most visible and present objects of sense, than, that this is the same Gospel which is still shining forth to the world, whereby an innumerable company of all nations, tongues and languages, have received the spirit, and been sealed; yea, it hath made that change upon men, in turning them from ungodlines and idols to serve the living God, as hath been no less marvellous than the turning of so many wolves into lambs. II. That it is the same gofpel which not only through a feries of 1600 years hath been attested, but by such innumerable wisnesses who counted not their life dear unto the death
for sealing thereof, and found it sweet to be offered
up in the Flames for Christ. III. Which in all Ages past hath stood out the greatest opposition that ever the World made to any interest, while the weapons of its Warfare were Spiritual, and not Carnal; and with that success that made the time of the Churches battest Persecution from Heathens the time also of its most remarkable spreading in the World. IV. That the same Gospel is revealed this day, which hath had fuch discernible triumphs and success when no external affiftance could be had for it; and there was no visible power by which it gained the most savage and dark parts of the Earth to take on the Yoak of Christ, and prefer the objects of Faith to the most desireable objects of Sense. V. Yea, the Gospel hath not only had such vital influence on Mens Heart and practice, to change it into the same Image; but that herein the doctrine of the Cross
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Cross of Christ in the greatest simplicity hath still been the most effectual way of its conquest, and the greatest attractive on Mens Souls to receive the same.

Qu. VI. How is it demonstrable that such remarkable sufferings of times past for the truth of Christ, were both sounded on the above certainty thereof, and carried out by a Divine Spirit above any as-

fistance of Nature?

Answ. That it is sure, I. Here was no Comedy, Play, or Personated sufferings which the Primitive Christians, then and in after times, did endure for Christ; or that these unexpressible torments and pains were any Dream, and Delusion either to themselves or the World, and that their adversaries did thus conflict and wrestle with their own shadow in fo continued and cruel an opposition. II. That the Joy and Exultation of Spirit these Witnesses had amidst their Torments, (who otherwise wanted no sense or feeling of their Pains and Sufferings, ) could have no rife but what was supernatural. III. That this could be no possible dissimulation or counterfeit when they were stepping into Eternity, nor the product of a distempered judgment; whilst all might see what seriousness of Spirit, Tenderness, and Bowels of Compassion to their Adversaries they did then evidence. IV. That those greatest sufferings were upon choice, and Christians hastned to endure them rather than to be fafe at the rate of receding and departing in any thing from the Ttuth. V. Yea no natural Reason can comprehend how such mean and feeble persons as many of these were, should endure, what would have made the greatest natural Courage to faint, as if they had foregone all Humane Passions Digitized by Google. Which

which Flesh and Blood must meeds have herein; so that I am constrain'd to see something no less marvellous and supernatural in the Faith of Martyrs, than in the Faith of Miraeles.

#### SECTION III.

Qu. I. Is it fully demonstrable, that the Faith of a Deity, and of such an establishment as a religious worship, must necessarily determine Men, and constrain them to be Christians, on this ground that they cannot but see how Religion hath not another Being in the Earth, but in the Truth of Christians.

Rianity?

Answ. It is simply impossible to make a rational trial herein, and not see the certainty of this demonstration, to be thus clear. I. That there needs no more for any of a serious spirit, but to come and see, what the whole frame of Heathenism was, and if it be possible to deny, (even under any sense of the law and dictates of Nature, ) its being the highest reproach of Mankind; and that the very myseries of that Heatbenish worship, were so horrid and impure, as they needed a Vail from the common view of the World. II. Nor can there be a rational reflection this day, on that strange Monster of Mahumetanilm, but as of a visible Prodigy of the Judgment of God, on these parts of the Earth; upon their Apostacy from the Christian Faith, by giving men up to such an Imposture, as exposeth the very name 'and form of Religion to derifion; and can never claim a reception either from the purity of its rule or internal evidence of the truth thereof, or of its having any possible consistence with it self. III. That it's

it's sure also that the Jewish Religion had never another Being but in the Truth and Faith of Christianity, and where this Foundation is divided from, it hath none at all; year that that People unto this day are such a Confirming Witness to the Christian Religion, as it's strange this doth not beget deeper Impressions on Mens Spirits. So that there is an absolute necessity, we must either forego the use of Reason, or see, if there be not such a Rule given and Revealed for Commerce betwixt God and Man, as the Scripture, (where the Laws and Constitutions of the Christian Faith, are for this end held forth,) that it's then sure there is no such thing, as any Religion in the Earth, but what were so highly irrational and absurd, as should rather justifie Atheism.

Q. II. What special Confirmation to Christianity, can this Visible State of the Jews bear, who are in

sexpress an Opposition to the Gospel of Christ?

Ans. If this were brought near our thoughts we should find it one of the great Assistances to our Faith. I. That it's sure there is such a People and Race, as a Living and Visible Evidence to our Sense, of the Truth of that renowned Nation, and Church of Israel, to which the Oracles of God were committed; and thus is still, as some part of the evident ruines of that once flourishing State. II. That the World may see, such a People kept by themselves and not mixed with the Nations, whose Fathers from one Generation to another did still own the Divinity of the Old Testament; and doth attest that Doctrine, in which the Truth and Substance of Christianity lies, even whilst with greatest malice they oppose the Christian Faith, to witness that there can be no possible.

possible Collusion and Deceit here. III. Their being under a stroak of that Judicial Induration and Blindness of Mind, as no Reason could possibly comprehend such a thing, how they should not see ' the Light in the very Noon-day of the Gospel, if we were not expresly foretold that they should be concluded under such an Arrest of Judgment, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. IV. That so immediate an appearance of God, is in the Judgement of that People, both in the manner and continuance thereof, as no instance could ever be found to resemble the same, since man was formed in the Earth; and is as a Conspicuous Monument of Divine Wrath, fet up for every Age and Time of the Church, to turn aside and consider this great fight, and inquire what means so strange and amazing a thing, as the State of the scattered Jews is, now under the Times of the Gospel. V. That this Desolation on them and stroak, had such special concurring circumstances for giving Light thereto; as being not above forty eight years, after the Death of Christ, with their hands, as it were, hot and reaking with that Blood which they had wished on them and their Children; that it should be at that time of the Passover, which was the very same of the Sufferings of our blassed Lord there, and pointing as with the finger at the same; as also by the Romans, whose Interest in their Opposition to Christ they pretended to own,

Qu. III. Is the way and manner of the Gospels Promulgation such, as no other Profession could ever pretend to, and where all may see there can be no ha-

man Interest or Contrivance in the same?

And. It is undeniable, that no Interest else was **D** 4

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ever in such a way promoted, and it does exceed all natural understanding, how the Truth of Christianity could in this manner prevail, I. To perswade men without any Motives, or Inducements from this present World, to imbrace a Doctrine so wholly repugnant to Nature; yea to prefer an Interest of things not seen, and which none ever in the Earth law, to the most desirable Objects of Sense. II. To admit no implicite Reception from any, but on their exactest Inquiry and Tryal herein; or in another way claim an Interest in Mens Affections, but by a full Affent of their Light and Judgment to the same. III. To admit no Gratification to the most Predominant Desires and Inclinations of Men towards any Darling Sin; which according to human Wildom would be judged of an absolute ne-cessity for gaining any Acceptance with such; yea to give no partial respect to the greatest Princes more than to the meanest. IV. To pursue its Interest, by so plain a Discovery of the Death, and Sufferings of our Blessed Lord, with the whole Ignoming thereof, when nothing could more evidently controll such an end by any Rules of human Wisdom and Policy, if there had been consulting with Flesh and Blood herein. V. And it's sure there could be no design, without an immediate Divine Power, in such a manner to plead the Interest of Christianity with men, by inserting Affliction, and the Cross in the first entry, as Essential to the Procession thereof, and holding forth the Neto the Profession thereof, and holding forth the Necessity of taking on the Yake of Christ, without which none can be his Disciples.

Qu. IV. But wherein doth the Evidence of that great Demonstration of the Gospel most clearly appear, in the Love and Unity of Christians amongst themselves, which we find Christ doth so specially press, for this end, that the World might know, and have such a Visible Seal of his Divine Mission? Joh. 17. 21.

Ans. The greatness of this Demonstration may be thus evident to all. I. That it's fo clearly demonstrative of the Purity of our Religion, which can admit of no Bitternels, Strife, Recrimination, or such Indecencies of Heat and Passion, which are the state Effects of Discord in the Church; and thus lets us see the Excellency of the Spirit and Rule of the Gospel. II. That thus also we may know the Power and Efficacy of the Truth thereof, which is according to Godlines, upon Mens Hearts, in subduing these Distempers of the Mind and Judgment. III. That this doth so specially tend to make Religion Lovaly, and to draw forth matter of Praise and Bleffing to God from the World, when they see such a Native Effect of Christianity as this, to make those who profess the same in that manner shine forth in Tenderness, Humility, and Brotherly Love, so that they become as a Publick Good and Blessing to Mankind in the places they are in. IV. This appears also from the Nature of that Union in the Church of Christ, and amongst his Followers, which only a Divine Power could both Frame and make Effectual; and it's sure that no Humane Society or Constitution could ever claim fuch an Unity therein as this is; where not only Perfons of all Nations and Languages, and of all Conditions, both high and low, but of the most different Interests, Humours, and dividing Circumstances in other things, do yet in so marvellous an Harmony meet in the Body of Christ which is his Church here here in the Earth. V. Because herein also dother the Glory and Honour of our Blessed Head, more eminently appear in securing this Unity of his Church, under a Diversity of Light and Judgment otherways, by a Spirit of Love, Meekness and Condescendence amongst his People; than by imposing the most severe and absolute Uniformity in all things, to be the alone Condition of Christian Communion.

Qu. V. But what strength and evidence doth this Demonstration of the Gospel, now bear in so divided a State of Religion, and when the wounds and breaches of the Church this day are like to bleed unto Death?

Ans. Whatever just cause be of grief, yet is there none for darkning the Truth of this Demon-firation, on these grounds. I. That none can deny the Perfection of the Rule of the Gospel, for there is a most firm and intire Unity amongst all the Followers of Christ on the Earth II. That no Opposition is made thereto, but what hath been foretold as one of the greatest Tryals of the Church under the New Testament, and the Spirit of God doth most expresly point at in these latter times. III. Because the furthest Opposition thereto can be no more cause for any to stumble, or question the Truth of this Demonfirstion, than whether there is a Devil, whose greatest design bath ever been to divide and break Christians amongst themselves. IV. Because this Union, which is chiefly Myftical and Invisible, is much greater often, than what this way may appear to the World, and of that kind as is not interrupted by distance of place, or any want of Local Communion. V. That such a guard is set by the Lord unto this piece of his Glory, to oppose any In-

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valion thereon, that there stands an Angel with a flaming Sword, upon every hand in the Commands and Threatnings of the Gospel, to secure this Blesfed Unity of the Saints amongst themselves, so as none can invade the same but on their highest Peril, of opposing that which is as the Apple of Christs eye. VI. That it's ever found that this Demonstration hath some clear Evidence amongst such who are indeed the Disciples of Christ, and according to their advance in the Life and Power of Christianity doth the more brightly shine forth; so that the nearer the Lines are to the Centre, the nearer also are they amongst themselves. VII. That in all times there hath been some tremendous mark of the Judgment of God made visible on such who are Contentious, and have made it their work to Cause Division in the Church and fow discord among Brethren.

Qu. VI. But what hath the Church now in these latter days to Compensate, and make up the want of that great Demonstration by Miracles, and such extraordinary Consirmations of the Christian Faith, as

were in the first times?

Ans. I. We may hereby see that the Seal of Martyrdom, which came in the room of Miracles to the Church, hath exceeded that which was in the first times of the Gospel. II. That there have been since such innumerable shiming Examples of Holiness, yea these continued to this day, whom the World might see did walk in the Light and Power of Christianity, as sure as men walk, under the Power and Vertue of a living Soul. III. That we now see what a length the Course of the Gospel and of the Church Militant is come, and how far thus the Times of the Gentiles are sulfilled, which once

was so contrary to all human Appearance. IV. That so sure and exact a Performance of the Scripture, is now undeniable in the event, and of such great and marvellous things which were foretold under the New Testament, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, what we see with our Eyes; and now have these things, which were in former Ages the Object of the Churches Faith, been made the Object of our Sense; and it's sure this is such a Seal and Confirmation to our Faith in these last times as doth much exceed the greatest Miracles which were in the first Planeing of the Gospel. V. Though we may not resolve our Faith on any Extraordinary Providences, or lay the least weight hereon to support the Authority of the Doctrine we profess, (fince this only is founded on that Sacred Revelation of Divine Truth in the Scripture, which is the infallible Rule to discern true Miracles, and what is Gods Seal herein under the undoubted Signature and Stamp of his own Power and working in the same 3) yet bath there been such incontroulable evidence of extraordinary Signs and Confirmations to confirm the Truth of the Reformed Religion, fince the Reformation, as in no Ages past was ever known, but with the first planting of the Gospel among the Gentiles.

### SECTION IV.

Qu. I. Is it clear and demonstrable that the Doctrine of Christ, is a Soul-Quickning and Experimental Religion, and the Trial thereof, in its most Supernatural Truths, of such rational Certainty and Evidence, that the World can no more deny or question the same than those Experiments of Na-

ture, that are of most universal Use?

Ans. Though men looked but at a distance here or were come from Heathenism, so far as to make a Serious Trial of Christianity, it's sure they could not but see, and be fully perswaded in their Judgment hereof on these grounds. I. That a discovery is undoubted and clear in the Scripture of so great things. as, that there is a Holy Ghoff, and there be his workings on Mens Souls of Peace with God, and the Joy of bis Presence, which all who receive the Gospel are called to know and prove on their own Trial. II. That this witness of Christian Experience, hath as discernable a Consent and Harmony therewith as Face answereth to Face in the Glass, and is clear to be no Casual Thing, but every step in this way of Trial, is by Scripture Light, and what Christians did before read there, they know it now by Feelings on their own Souls. III. That this in all Ages of the Church and where-ever such as served God in the Spirit were found in the most remote parts from others, hath still been the same; and like a great Roll is sent down from one Generation to another, with their Confirmatory Seal, that God # faithful and true, in those Truths of his Word which seem most incredible to the World, and now come to our hand to require the same Attestation and Witness. IV. That they who know and testifie these things, sometimes found it not easie to believe the same, and did no less judge of such great Experiments of Religion as a Dream or imaginary thing than most now do, until they knew them by Experience on their Soul. V. That such also have been the most Burning and Shining Lights that ever were in

the Church, and these innumerable is all Ages declare the same; and that in the Mouth of the Grave and entrance to an Eternal State when no outward Interest could sway them hereto. VI. That it must be a matter of greatest Assurance which hath then pressed the most tender Parents with their last and dying Breath to commend the same Trial to-their Children, and to charge their being earnest herein as the greatest Interest they could leave them. VII. That what ever Differences be oft among these in some matters of Truth: Yet, in the Certainty of this great Trial of the Life, Power and Comforts of Religion, there is an Harmonious Oneness in the same Testimony in all Times of the Church. VIII. That if any question this, because so remote from Mens Senses, and the Judgment of Carnal Reason; the reality of its Effects, doth unanswerably prove both the Reality and Excellency of the Caufe.

Qu. II. What clear and Rational Conviction can you offer, of so great a thing as Conversion of men from a State of Nature, to a new state by Grace, which doth raise them as far above the residue of Mankind, as Reason doth above the state of the

Beafts?

Ans. Though I should strive against the Conviction of such a Miracle, and Demonstration of the Gospel, as Conversion is, yet were it not possible to deny such demonstrative Evidences as the World hath hereof: I. That it is sure such a Change is made essentially requisite to the Being, and Constitution of a Christian, by the whole Confest of the Scripture. II. That there was never yet an Argument in Nature, for ones being a Christian.

ftian in the Life and Power thereof: what ever may be for a maked form or show. III. That they are not a few, but innumerable Instances in all times and of all Ranks and Conditions of Men on whom so great a Change and difference hath been made thus evident, both from themselves what once they were, and from the residue of the World. IV. That this hath been not only upon such as have been fig-nally Impious in their Practice, but who in their Judgment were wont to deride Holines as a Fancy; so as Atheifts must grant that there have been as profest Asheists sometimes as themselves, who have been made such Conspicuous Monuments of the Power of the Gospel. V. That none can Object here, as once the Jews did, Do any of the Rulers, or such as the World counts most wife, and knowing stand witnesses to the same; when it is so known that there have not been more Wife, Learned, and Judicious in the Things of Reason upon the Earth, than fuch as have been eminent Examples of the Power of Conversion? VI. That its marvellous Effects in subduing men, from what once was their Predominant Interest and Idol, and to part from what had been as their right Eye, or Hand could on-ly be from an Immediate Divine Power. VII. That fuch as were greatest Adversaries to the Truth. have been made no less eminent Instruments in the Service of Christ, and choice Vessels of Honour, than once they were in their Enmity and Opposition.
VIII. That this Change hath been discernable in times of most Visible Persecutions and Hazard, when no outward Advantage or Gain could have the least influence thereon. Now as these are demonstrably clear, so can there be no possible ground to

to question this. I. That the Scripture is faithful and true in so great a discovery. II. That there is a Divine Spirit and a Power above nature, which accompanies the same in such a change. III. That there are surely, contrary states in another World, when they are so undeniably manifest bere.

Qu. III. But can so great an experiment of Religion as that of Communion betwirt and and Men, here upon Earth be made rationally convincing to such

as are themselwes strangers thereto; and for a surther consistming of the Christian Faith?

Answ. Though this be an experiment of Divine Truth of a more transcendent interest and value than all that ever were in Nature, yet it is no less. evident, and there can be no possible delusion herein 5 if I. It's that to which so innumerable a Company bears Testimony and hath seat down the same, as that which not once or twice they have approved but in the continued trial of their Life. Il. That it's known to the World, that such as testifie what they do, and have so oft found in the retirement of their Souls with God, are of as discerning Spirits to know the true value of things, as any elie; yea fuch whose testimony in other things the worst of men could not refuse nor deny. III. That it's undeniably evident, fuch must have another acquaintance and feciety than that of men; which not only maker these hidden exercises of goddiness to desireable, (where all may see they more see than follow any humane Witness, ) but also makes so visible a change both in their case and countenance asset most sad anguish and down-castings of specit. IV. That it is so evident also how such as are most ferious.

ferious this way, have been visibly oft raised above their ordinary case, and frame in Prayer, and other duties of Religion; yea, in that manner, as they who never knew there is a Holy Ghost but by report, could not withstand so clear conviction of the reality hereof, that can beget such liberty, bumble tenderness and melting of Heart, yea such discernable joy and considence. V. That no delusion or false shew can be here, when it's ever seen, that such as are most serious and frequent in Prayer and these hid retirements with God, are the most flourishing also in the vitals of Christianity, and have the most honourable lustre, and appearance of any in their profession. VI. That it's such only whose joy and comfort is most specially discernable beyond others, when these lower springs of outward help and encouragement are most visibly thut up.

Qu. IV. Is that great, and experimental part of Religion in the Power of the Conscience over man, such as may be as demonstrable to the World, as the

truth of a rational Being?

Answ. It may be matter of wonder that men are not struck with deeper convictions hereon, when they cannot but see. I. That though this be the greatest tormenter, and troubler of the World, yet is there no possible retreat from its power, tho men should sie to the uttermost parts of the Earth, but doth it enforce the Soul to a reflexion on its self, even when it trembleth at that sight. II. That it causeth great sear and horrour upon the commitment of secret sins, when no dread of Humane Witness, or of visible hazard this way could occasion it. III. That it admits no violence in any to out-dare the same, but is a power that the great-

est Monarchs find to be stronger than they & and is fuch, that these oft are enforced for present case, and relief either to divert, or bribe the same by some false grounds of peace. IV. That it constrains men to Justifie God, and Judge themselves, (when his hand doth pursue them,) and to find out their fin, and guilt, which was before hid, V. That it makes men also afraid to be alone with themselves; and to tremble at the Word of Truth, because its light doth torment them, by that unavoidable application which Conscience makes hereof. VI. Yea it makes mens guilt so legible oft in their countenance, (even when they study most to conceal it, ) that all may see there is an accuser within, whose Authority and Power cannot possibly be declined. VII. That with so remarkable a considence and security, it doth support Mens Spirit, and makes it cake to fustain its greatest infirmities from without, when it is a Friend; yea, and upholds the opprest with unspeakable Peace and Comfort, when it doth oft cause the oppressour to tremble.

Q11. V. But what doth most necessarily result from so clear a demonstration as the Conscience is, for con-

firming of our Faith?

Answ. I. That it's infallibly thus clear, that there is a Higher Power and Judgment, to which all mankind is subjected, and gives the World an unavoidable demonstration, both of the being of God, and of the Truth of his Word, in the great and supernatural discovery which it makes hereof. II. That there is a Supream and Infallible Law also and Invisible Judge above us, under whose power and authority this Court of Justice doth (without respect of Persons) both Summen, Arres, bring in Witness

and Sestence great and small. III. That the Internal Government of our Bleffed Lord, this way (both in the severity of his rebukes and most sensible enlargements of Peace and Comfort) is unavoidably demon-Arated. IV. That it bears so clear evidence to unknown and undoubted relief, and none else could be ever found, for these Wounds and Stings of the Conscience, but in the Light and Potyer of Christianity. V. That it is simply impossible for men to delight freely in a course of fin, when no Humane Power can disarm the Conscience of that so intolerable a sting, by which it begins so early a Hell within the Soul. VI. That fuch is the Power and Peace of a good Conscience, as can make it stand unbroken amidst the greatest ruins and terrours of the World, when under such a guard as that of its own innocency.

#### SECTION V.

Qu. I. Is the evidence of a Kingdom of Darkness; in a direct opposition and contrariety to that Kingdom of Light, which Christ hath set up by the Gospel, such as the certainty thereof may be a mat-

ter of Seuse, as well as of Faith?

Answ. This is of such special use, both to confirm the Christian Faith, and awake such to deeper reflexion on the same, with whom there seems no hope to prevail, but by proofs from pal-pable experience; and it is not possible to deny. I. That there is such a power, as the Devil and those wicks ed Spirits incompassing the Earth, yea that they have anordinary and familiar converse with many therein. II. That these Spirits (though once originally excellent,) have fallen into such an Apostacy, as all E a

may see their aim and only pleasure, is to dissonour God, and destroy his Image in Man. III. That it is impossible to deny the marks of that Power and Conquest, which the Prince of this World hath every where amongst men; yea how visibly many are transformed into his Image by fuch prodigious and desperate acts of wickedness, as we should think humane nature could not but tremble at. IV. That none can question the certainty both of Sense and Reason which is in the truth of Apparitions and Bodily Possessions of Men in all Ages, and in all places of the Earth; and can need no demonstration for this, that in many places of the Earth, the Devil is both visibly and audibly known. V. That he is so manifest in his appearance as a Spirit of Blasphemy, which impetuously acts Men. to War against Heaven with their Tongue in such Oaths and Curling as have no sensual pleasure, or gain herein; yea, as a Spirit of Delusion in so vistble an excitement of others to such extravagancies (under a shew of Religion,) as are inconsistent with any use of Judgment or Reason. VI. That so innumerable a company of humane Race, hath in all Ages been in a formal, and express Covenant with these powers of darkness is undeniable, upon the most severe and impartial inquiry herein.

Qu. II. What special affistance to your Faith doth the certainty of these Powers of Darkness bring therewith?

Anju, I. It is plain that such a Party both in their Nature and continued Actings, are in a stated oppolition to the Kingdom of Christ. II. It is visble, that the Prey which these Mighty Hunters do follow after, is not our Body, or the things of this

Life, but it is the *Immortal Soul*, and *Future*State, that Man might be made sharer of the
same Misery under which they are concluded.

III. All may see their being under restraint of a Supream Power above them, and under fuch Chains as do irrefiltibly bound their rage and enmity against Man, by an invisible Guard and Hedge which they cannot break over. IV. Their greatest rage, and strugting is against the Converfion of finners to God, and to hold fast his possession in such, as the Spirit of God doth not more clearly move for their rescue, than these do to cross that blessed design of the Gospel. V. There are none that are serious in the Truth and Life of Religion but find themselves pursued by such an Adversary; and have as discernably another Party than themselves, or the World to conslict with, as if they saw them in a visible shape. VI. That by the Goffel and within the Precinct of the Church, there is discernably a much greater restrains of Satans "Dominion and Power than in all the Earth besides; yea that the advantage of being within the external covenant of Baptism, is so demonstrable that the least yielding or tendency to a renouncing of the fame, (or any Acts of Homage, ) for making use of his help, hath ever made way for some more extraordinary Power of the Devil over fuch than others. VII. Thus is a most undenlable Confirmation given of an Invisible World, and of such intellectual Beings there, as are far above man; yea and it is plain that there is an intercourse betwixt Men and Spirits, fuch may clearly thew the interest that Man's Soul hath in another State and World than this.

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Qu. III. Is that great truth of the Immortality of the Soul, and its never dying state after Death, as fully demonstrable to Reason, as it is by the furthest

certainty of Fanb?

Anjw. Though it be so amazing a thing to believe an Immortal Soul, and Eternal State, wherein it must shortly enter, as by few seems to be apprehended, yet are its demonstrative evidences such, that except men lose all sence and use of reason, it is not possible to deny. I. That there is such an Immaterial and Active Subfrance as the Soul, which can admit of no cause, either of its decay or dissolution, from the Body; yea that the greatest excellency of this visible Creation, is here, that such a vital Beam of Life, Light, and Immortality, as the Soul of Man is therein. II. Though we cannot see this rare and wonderful Being, yet we fully perceive it to be something distinct from the Body, and to have a distinct interest, both in its griefs and comforts. III. That it can have no dependance on the Body in its Being, which doth no way depend thereon in its Actings and Exercise; but is oft most vigorous and clear, in its exercise, not only when most fegarate and abstract from sensible things, but when the flesh is under the greatest decay, and near its dissolution; to shew the Soul lieth not a dying with the Body, but hath its diffinct subliffence, to live in a separate state, when it dies. IV. Its being peculiarly framed for converse, and intercourse with spiritual Beings, yea its being the only part of the visible Creation admitted to fellowship with the invisible God, and to have reflex acts upon it self. V. It is a Being of a higher nature and value than the Sun Moon and Stars; which not only can know,

and conceive of things above the evidence and impressions of sense, but make a rational choice of good, (though cross to any sensual pleasure;) yea to rejoice, and have its proper delights, when the body is afflicted and in pain; nor can it be defiled from the most loathsome sores and defilements of the Flesh, so as we must needs see both its Dominion and Preheminence over the Body, and have affuredly a subsidence without the same. VI. It is such a Being, as is capable of a happiness beyond the whole extent of the World, and hath these intellectual Faculties, which cannot possibly want, both objects fuitable thereto, and injoyments above the Senses. OVII. The most choice and excellent, are usually most afflicted, and crushed under the feet of their oppressours, whilst the vilest slourish in the Earth and have no bands in their death, so that such were of all men the most miserable, if in this life both their being and bleffedness were terminated. VIII, That there is so universal a sense of Immortality, that they who both fear and hate the evidences hereof, yet under some constraint of Reason, have the same for a continued terrour. IX. That it is fure the certainty of death, makes it simply impossible, for things only fuited to this Life of Sense, to be the ultimate good, or fruition of Man; fince else the Beafti should have a greater happiness than such, if it were not for respect to an after and Immortal State.

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Qu. IV. What confirmation to your Faith does that great and amazing change by Death offer, when

it would feem to be something meerly natural?

Answ. Though the only wise God moves herein according to the nature of second causes, and it hath various ways of approach unto men, yet

may all see with the furthest conviction of rational evidence, as well as certainty of Faith. I. That Death in its first constitution is Penal; and comes by a Divine appointment unto all, not meerly as men, but as finners; and to be no natural accident and refult of our Primitive and Original Frame. II. That it's Death as a Penaley which keeps the fear and dread thereof so much on all living, it being in that last period, that the eternal state of Men is deci-ded. III. That the sing and bitterness of fin, is To manifest in innumerable diseases and stroaks of Death, which many feel an 100, times ere they dye once, beyond any other of the Creatures. IV. Though the Sentence of dying is on all, yet so great a difference is betwixt the Saints and relidue of Men here, that its penal execution on the ungodly, is fuch as nature can give no support under it. V. That supernatural presages and warnings hereof ere it come, are in all times known and fure; yea fuch extraordinary evidences are sometimes of the precise time, as could have no possible rise from any natural cause. VI. That its immediate commissions from a supream and Invostible Power, is so evident in such executions oft, of this Sentence, by Sword, Famine and Peftilence, as the visible Finger of God, in a just retribution unto men for sin, may be no less seen, (and a supernatural causality, ) than the effects have been undoubted and clear; to shew that such is the state of Man, that this great revolution by Death, doth each moment depend on a call from Heaven. VII. That the certainty of something supernatural in this King of Terrours, is fo known that as no relief can pessibly be found, but in the truth and power of Christianity, to let men both

both above the fear of Death and an after State, when once it comes near. VIII. Yea that it is surely above the possibility of Nature, which can bear out in this great adventure and trial of Mens Faith, both in the truth and strength thereof, at Death; for which end the Lord hath thus chosen that by so strange an entry, and at so dark a Port they should first pass to the full enjoyment of that glorious state above.

Qu. V. What evidence and demonstration can you show, to confirm so great a Faith of an Eternal Glory prepared for the Saints in Heaven, and of its earnest and first truits here, as may strike an undenia-

ble conviction bereof on the World?

Answ. I. The visible ripening and resemblance to such a state in all the degrees of a Christians growth, to a more full stature of the man in Christ, may be no less evident than the natural growth of our Body. II. Though the opening of these Gates of the Second World be hid, ( fo as no humane sense can discern the Spirit in its ascent through those higher Regions, to that unconceivable Paradise and Glory in the Third Heaven,) yet is the triumphant entry and passage of innumerable Christians at death, such as hath oft been a matter of sense and clearest evidence to the World, III. Such also were both humble, tender, and smeere in their Life, and then in so great a composure of judgement, that all might see they knew what made them glad, and could swallow up both the fears and bitterness of Death; yea and this was not given for their own support only, but for a more publick use, for the Conviction and Confirmation of others. IV. The state of glory is demonstrable and hath been oft brought

brought down to Mens sense, by these revisions joys of the Martyrs of Christ, and exultation of Spirit even in the Flames. V. Supernatural comforts attend the Life of Christianity, and can have no possible rise from the sless and outward causes, with that Joy and Peace, which by so natural a result follows well-doing, and any service of love for Christ, which all may see to be the first fruits of that harvest which is above. VI. Rare and marvellous a frame of the new man, fet up in this lower Region of Grace, in so discernable a conformity to the bleffed God, and refemblance to another state than here, to which the World is but as a place of Pilgrimage, trial and a preparatory fate only. VII. Visible returns of joy and comfort Christians have after saddest conflicts and downcastings, and such day-break of vital quickening beams of Divine Light, that have often been no less evident, than that of the Martyrs at the Stake, who cried out, Now he is come, he is come. VIII. Their breathings of Love after an unseen Christ and visible effects of its power on men, might shew some begun translation of the Soul so far herein, as to be more where it loves than where it lives. IX. Though we cannot see here, that ineffable glory, which is above, but should have our Faith instead of Eyes; yet such is the truth of boliness, as doth not only evidence, but in its own nature partake of a future glory; so as every degree and act thereof doth enter in a begun state of fruition and bleffedness, and makes it simply impossible for a good man in any true exercise of Godlines, not to be happy also, and thus in a more near capacity to know that joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which is above. X. By

lo sure, known, and tryed a passage betwixt Heaven and Mens Souls in Prayer, with so settled a Trade of commerce this way, and certain returns, as with affurance such can say, though they must change their place, yet not their company. XI. The whole dispensations of Providence in Israels passage through the Wilderness, and to so excellent a Country as Canaan, is no less sure in its self, than that it was given for an Embleme and Type of the journying and militant state of the Saints here, and to be a solemn pledge of that Canaan above. XII. Such is the Magnificence, Harmony and Order of these visible Heavens, and Celefial Bodies there, with their different degrees of glory, (though all illuminated from the same Fountain of Light the Sun ) as we may judge by a Divine Ordination to have some peculiar respect to that end, to awake and raise our thoughts to these bigber Regions of Glory, which are above all these, by what is thus visible to our Eyes; where the redeemed of the Lord shall be ever fixed, and shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Fatber.

Qu. VI. What wifible and awakening evidences are there of the truth of an Hell, and that state of horrour and torment in another World, which even to mens senses here, might present the certainty

thereof?

Anjw. I. That it can be no more sure, that there is such a power and party as that of the Devils, than the reality of some such a borrid Region and place also, to which they belong, and are adjudged to. II. From so innumerable a company of business race, as are not in the visible service of these Infernal Spirits, but partakers of the same nature and

and suming against the Holy God and his Image which doth clearly witness their respect and tendency to the same state and place, and Confederacy in their judgment, as here in their suffice.

III. Such visible impressions of vindictive justice. ard on mens Souls, with such borrour of Confinence and unsufferable torments this way, as in all Ages have been known by most remarkable instances, (when not in the least distemper of their natural reafon,) that may present to mens Senses something of
a visible. Hell, as convincingly, as it one had
visen from the Dead, for the same. IV. A
trembling sense, and terror of Divine Vengeance,
oft follows upon borrid acts of wickedness, and so
eminently breaks forth upon a surprising fight of Death, that all may fee form thing more dreadful herein than in the diffolution of Nature; and the Power and present Arrest of a future judgment is made visi-ble in the same. V. There are begun degrees, of bialphanning and rage against God, because of his plagues, and such prodigies of crueley exercised by Men here in the Earth, as may be evident to all to be more than humane, and rather the effects of infernal spirits acting in a humane shape. Vs. So clear a prelude and beginning of Hell, is in that judicial obduration, and blindness, which many are given up to, ( under the greatest discoveries of light,) that all may see their being thus bound over in Chains, and thut up in Prison, until Death bring them forth to the Execution; and that no relief or application of the means of Grace hath then any success. VII, Such a Map and Shadow of Eternal Vengeance, is in these terrible acts of Di-wine Judgment instilled here on Apostates, and Per-Jeoutors

fecutors of the Truth, and other flagitious persons, which with the very first view might present an awful and immediate appearance of God in the same, some strange and supernatural punishment is oft so visible on the workers of Iniquity. VIII. And (whatever be of natural causes in such wishble representations here in the Earth, as that sulphureons Lake where once Sodom was, and those burning Mountains of Hacla, Atna, and Vesurium, ) yet we may truly judge that they are thus let before the World as visible memorials of the Infernal Flames; and as it were so many Chimny's or Vent-holes thereof, for such who will not believe the same, because they do not yet see or feel such a thing.

Qu. VII. What affiftances bath our Faith, of that great and wonderful truth of the Resurrection of the Body, after its dissolution in the Grave unto

Duft ?

Answ. I. It hath great affishance from that visible and stupendious frame of the Heavens and the Earth, when it's sure that the same Institute Power, that hath not only made Man, but the whole Creation, can as easily collect and reunite the dispersed ashes of the Body, as form the same. II. From that greatest pledge here of, in the Resurression of the Body of Christ. III. From that tribulation and sore pain, that the Saints here in their outward man are exposed to, since it is sure that in the holy justice of God, he did not give such Bodies for labour, and for toil, and to his Martyrs, to endure unexpressible torments for Christ, at last to perish for ever. IV. From these visible resemblances and presignations of the Resurression which the Lord hath given to confirm our Faith herein,

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in the ordinary course and productions of nature; fo as all may fee how every night is as the Grave of the day light, and each morning a new refurrection of the fame; and how visible an image of Death is in each season of the Winter, with so marvellous and beautiful a Resurrection of the Earth, on every seturn of the Spring, in the Herbs, Flowers and Plants, taking life and riling again, in the leaves, blossams and fruits; yea this in such a variety, as may no less convincingly evidence an Infinite Divine Power herein, than that the same body of man should be raised at the last day. V. From that continued miraele of the Harvest, after the Seedtime, with so amazing a production of the Grain fower in the Earth, and its first dying there before it be quickned, so as to be at last brought to 30, 60, yea sometimes an bundred fold, out of the very same grain; which to these who had never before known the same would seem incredible, and above all reason to conceive, or give credit thereto,

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#### CHAP. III.

The Confirming Work of Religion, improved with respect to the Times, to clear the way of the Lord berein, before this Generation, and let us see bow nothing is so strange in the Events of this day, which should not more strengthen, then shake, and that the God of the Resormed Church, doth still own the same Interest, according to his Faithfulness: Which is here briefly Pointed at, upon some special inquiry, proposed about the same.

#### SECTION I.

Qu. I. VI Hat can afford both Light, and Confirmation to our Faith, in fuch a time, when we fee the Work of the Lord, about his Church, to be most remarkably now a work of Judgment, with such dark and searching Tryals therewish, as former times have not known.

Anf. It is sure, we have seen nothing, but what might have been soo evidently looked for, and that we can pretend no want of Light herein, upon these Grounds. I. That the Trials of a Church, should be suited to the measure of their Talent of Light, and when this hath been in some more than ordinary way dispensed, that some remarkably fearehing Times might be expected to follow; nor can it be now strange to us, that such things fail in with this day, which did not meet the Churches of Christ at the sirst entry of the Resormation, who then had not so clear Discoveries of the Truth, and that measure of Consirmation therein, which hath been since.

II. That some unusual Tryals, and Conflicts, in the Lords Method of Providence, should be sujted also, to the greatness of that Work, which he is bringing forth, may be no strange thing; and to see a time of such sore wrestlings as this, when all things feem to cry, and be in Pain, as Micah 4. 20. Yea when some great event of the Scripture is to be revealed to the World, and near to its full beight, and Period of Accomplishment, ( as we have safe ground for Assurance of this day.) III. Nor hath this sad and dismal hour on the Church, been more obvious than the provoking Cause hereof, in which the Holy Righteousness of God, may be no less clear, than the Cloud now is dark; when there has been such a Visible falling off from that Love, Tenderness, and Power of Religion, that did formerly attend its Profession; for these many years past we might have feen that some fore and remarkable Judgment was coming, and that if we had not been in such a manner undone, we were, under some sadder stroak of Spiritual Judgment, ready to be utterly undone. IV. Yea it hath been too Visible, that such Evils followed the Reformed Churches, as in no time it was ever known, that the Holy God, did pass by, without some signal Evidence of his Wrath against the same before the World, V. We know that Carnal Confidence hath a Curfe ever waiting upon it in the Scripture, and none can take it off, or make that thrive which God hath himself cursed; and it is too visible, how far we have gone thus out of the way of our Strength, by such eager seeking Humane Props, and Support, that we have forgot the Guide of our Youth, and Covenant of our God. and what great things he hath formerly done in the

the greatest strains of his Church; when there was much humble trasting, that the Spirit of the Lord, would do more to secover his Truth than all Humane Might or Power, could do.

#### SECTION II.

Qu. VI Hat Talent, are we still accountable for to support our Faith against the greatest Fears of this time, from these immediate Appearances of God, and of the Glory of his Power, for the same Truth and Cause of the Reformed Church, we are now called to contend for, which hath been since the Reformation when so strong and unusual a Tide, now is against the same?

Ans. If men shut not their eyes, and bide this great Thient of the Works of God, under the Ground, it's sure none can Question such a Seal, which before the Sun, (to the Amazement and Conviction of the World.) hath been put to t'ne Truth of the Resormed Religion; that we are now brought under such a Call, as the Church of Frael was, Deut. 4. 34. To ask of the Times, that are past, since Israels coming out of Egypt, and since the first planting of the Gentile Church, by the Gospel, whether there bath been so great a thing as this in the Earth, that God bath essayed to take to himself a People from the midst of other Nations, by I emptations, by Signs, and by Wonders, and by War, and by a Mighty Hand, and by an out-stretche d Arm, and by great Terrours, according to all t'nat the Lord our God hath done for the rescue of his People, in these last Times, from Antichristian B ondage and Darkness;

and settling them in a Church-state; but unto us was this shewed, that we might know, that the Lord be a God, and there is none else beside him: Ye are still called to see, and be as Eye Witnesses to these things; I. How Bright a Day of the Gospel of Christ, did go before this great Darkness on the Church, and what a solemn Triumph in these late Ages the Truth hath had over Antichrift, so as the full stroak and ruine of his Kingdom, (which is sure and established in the Premise of God, ) seems not now more marvellous and above humane appear rance, than what we have feen, in the begun degrees of its accomplishment. II. In how few years also, there was, as a new Christian World brought forth, in that swift Course and Progress which the ingathering of the Reformed Churches had, to as between the Year 1560, and 1621. such farmous Plantations of the Gospel were setled in a Churchstate; which all may see was the immediate Work and Power of God; to shew that none should fear, or flagger at bis Promise; though the waters yet swell, and come to the flowings of fordan, and dif-ficulties appear unsuperable to humane Sence, after these great things which the Lord hath done. III. How extraordinary a Calling, and excitement of Infruments, was then evident, for the Service of that time, and Reapers thus eminently prepared for so great an Harvest of the Gospel, as might put the World to inquire whence these were, in so numeyous a Concurrence, when a few of such a Spirit. were to rarely to be found in many Ages before. Yea such an Accession also, of Spiritual Gifm, and the lost been formerly known, fince the first co-

ining of the Gospel to the Gentiles; wherein it may be said, the Glory of these last Times hash even in some degree exceeded that of the first. V. And can the most dismal things of this time, countervail the Confirmations of our Faith, who have so clearly seen, with the first breaking up of the Purer Do-Etrine of Christ, the Power and Life of Christianity came therewith to the World, as a Seal, and Attestation thereto, beyond any Miracles; yea how innumerable a Company, in these last Ages of different Tongues and Languages, and these so remote from one another, did not only receive the same Truth, but with fuch Resolution Adventure their Souls thereon, as might fully witness, they had another prospect of Christianity, and to be in some other manner ravished with the Glory and Beauty of the same, than is now in these times: VI. Such high Spring tides of the Power, and Efficacy of the Gospel, might be evident to all, after so sad a restraint had been for so many Ages before, under Antichristian darkness; for whatever was then as a Private Seal, on the Spirit of Christians whilst the Witnesses did Prophesse in Sack-cloth, yet was there no such Evidence and Demonstration of the Holy Ghoft, or a Publick Confirmatory Seal to the Truth, as was after the Reformation. VII. Yea was it not the most Sober, Serious, and Inquisitive Part of Men, upon a sure Trial of the Grounds of their Faith, who did most firmly imbrace the same ; and how many of these also were of the greatest Parts and Abilities, whom none could Judge to Adventure so far herein, without the highest Assurances, that this was their undoubted interest and Salvation. VIII. We have seen not only men of mean F 2 Digitized by Googled

and low Estate, but such of the Highest Place and Quality, most chearfully adventuring whatever Interest could be dearest to them in the Earth, for the Truths sake; yea it was ever found, that such as were most acquainted with the Reformed Religion in its Power, and lived up in their Practice to. what they professed thereof, were these who with the greatest Affurance, most resolutely still adhered. thereto. IX. We have seen also, its most remarkable spreading in the World, when there could be no possible precence of a Worldly Interest, or External Motives for the same. X. We have seen something not only extraordinary, but even Miraculous in the Joy, and Resolution of innumerable Martyrs fince the Reformation, who did bear out with a more than humane strength, against a cruelty so visibly Inhumane, and Savage; yea which did in sque de-grees exceed that measure of the Heathens, in the Primitive Times, as being against a greater Light than theirs. XI. And have we not seen of what Spirit, such still have been since the Reformation. who were the most notorious Instruments in the Churches Perfecution, and how visibly such did act herein, under so impetuous an incitement of the Devil, that as Tertulian, in his Apology speaks of Nero, the Truth might boast in having such Adversaries. XII. It is sure we have seen, that no humane Power, could yet ever undo this bleffed Inte-terest of the Reformed Religion, tho' no way, or change of Weapons, bath been left untried; but we have thus teen, whither fo ftrong, and united a Confederacy, as the Catholick League in France did at last resolve, and not only in the raine of the greates. Actors and Contrivers therein, but to a further

ther establishing of the Reformed Churches there, as though such had intentionally acted for the same; when if second Causes had brought forth their Ordinary effects. it might have been judged impossible to fail. XIII. We have feen that iffue of all the Councels, Expence and Cruelty of Philip the 11. of Spain, to bear down the Truth of the Gospel in the Netberlands, which was to the furthest setling of this Illustrious State and the Church of Christ there; yea how their Conspicuous Rise and Flourishing even in the Externals, and their resolute adherence to the Truth of Christ did most visibly keep together. XIV. We know that deluge of Blood, which so quickly followed the French Massacre; and the most dismal time which ever that Nation knew, did then visibly Contemporate, with such a time of their greatest Rage and Persecution against the Truth, and that Event of the Third Vial most clearly fulfilled herein, Rev. 16.5, 6. Thou are Righteoms, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because show bast judged thus, for they have shed the Blood of thy Saints and Prophets, and thou haft given them Blood to drink in great measure. XV. Yea have we not feen how four Kings of France Succesfively, were in less than thirty years, taken away, in the fame continued pursuit, how to destroy the Church there, in whom that whole race of the Valois was thus extinct; yea in the manner of their Death, were most remarkable Monuments of Divine Judgment, as the most famous Writers of that time do attest. XVI. We have seen what marvellous effects did follow those Bloody Years of Queen Mary's Reign in England, to promote and commend the Protestant Doctrine to Mens Consciences there, with F 2

with so great a Triumph as it had in the Sufferings of such choice and excellent witnesses for Christ, and hath brought in more Rent to the Praise and Glory of their Bleffed Head, than may to the fartheft compense all that Blood of the Saints there, though highly Precious in the Eyes of the Lord. XVII. We have seen likewise the Blood and Cruelty of late. against the Protestants in Bobemis, in a short time most Visibly returned on the Authors thereof, and how the immediate Finger of God might be seen in calling forth the Swedes to avenge the same, and in that desolating stroak which followed in Germa-197. XVIII. We have seen in these late Times the Issue of that horrid Massacre on the Protestants in Ireland, to the utter ruine (in a very few years after,) of that Barbarous Party, who had thus acted herein. XIX. We have feen what wonderful Providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of Protestants in the Valleys of Piedmons since the Reformation, upon the account of that Bloody Maffaere which was fet on foot there against them, which was so astonishing as all might see an extraordinary Appearance of the Lord herein, as is clearly atte-fted by the most Faithful Histories of that time-XX. And can it be forgot unto this day, how visibly a Divine Hand did appear in breaking that great Spanish Armado, in the Year 1588, which had been for some years in Contriving against England. XXI. Astonishing, and specially Demonstrative of the immediate Power and Presence of God, and matter of Wonder and Praise also for after Ages, was that solemn time of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland, for planting the Reformed Religion there; with that zeal and oneness of Spirit,

Spirit, as did then appear in all ranks to imbrace and adhere to the Profession thereof, amidst the greatest threatnings of their Adversaries; so as a few Tears did bring forth that, which would have feemed strange for an Age to accomplish; yea that we find betwixt the last Martyr for the Fruth there, who was burnt at St. Andrews, 1558. and the establishment of the Protestant Religion, and full abolishment of *Popery*, with the full Concurrence of Civil Authority herein, in July 1560, was but little above two Years, to shew what great things the Lord can do, above all Humane Council or Confidence, XXII. It's fure we have feen in what remarkable degrees these last Vials of the Holy Judgment of God, have taken place on the Kingdom of Antichrift, and how Conspicuous the Event hath been of that Prophecy, 2 Thes. 2.8. in these great Effects and Confumption thereof by the Ministry of the Gospel, as an assured Pledge of the full Accomplishment of what remains herein. XXIII.And as every step of the Churches Rise, bath been still advanced in a continued Conflict betwixt the Trutb and Antichrift, so have we still seen, when the Asfault and Opposition hath been greatest, its most remarkable tendency to a greater Victory; which were it rightly considered upon clear and solid grounds from the Scripture, the most formidable appearances of Trouble from this Adversary would with more Comfort than Fear this day be looked on; so that whatever be the nearest and most immediate events, yet is it fure, as the Lord is true, (whole Word is passed hereon,) that who soever gives their Power and Strength to support that Interest of Antichrist shall lose the day, and find their Cause,

desperate, for the party with whom they contend herein is the Son of God, against whom no humans. Power shall ever be able to stand. These are but a few, which are here mentioned, of the great Alls of our God, in behalf of his Truth, to be still as present in our sight, in a time when the Spirits of many are ready to Stagger and Faint; and here mentioned, to lay no stress or weight of the Authority of the Truth and Doctrine of our Protession thereon, but on the alone Revelation of the Scripture; but they are such an undeniable Seal for Confirming our Faith, and of so known, Publick and famous Evidence, as should be no less considered and taken to Heart now, than in the time when the Lord thus appeared herein.

### SECTION III.

Qu. That present Judgment are we called to have of this Time, upon clear and assured grounds from the Scripture; that wemay know under what aspect thereof, the present State of Religion, and of the Reformed Churches is under, when so great a Crisis is this day, as would seem to be in the very Height of its Conslict, whether as to Life or Death?

Ans. It is no present Appearance of the time that must Direct our Faith, nor should we either stretch our Fears or Expectations of Things and Events, beyond what the God of Truth doth warrand in his Word, but it's clear, if we credit the same, and admit the Divinity of the New Testament, there is no just Cause of Hesitation or Darkness as to what the Lord is bringing forth for his Church now in these

these latter days; nor can there be any pretence, to seek another Light, (either from the Stars above, or the Diviners of this Time,) when so woful a Trade hath got up in the World, that men will thus go to the God of Ekron, as though there were not a God in Israel, or such a thing, as his written Oracles to inquire at, when it's fure these lie open, and with a clear and diffinct found speak to all who have a Serious and Unprejudged Spirit. I. That the Church under the New Testament hath now passed and gone through that most dismal and continued Tryal herein, which was to go over her Head under Antichrists Reign and Height, and whatever appearance he now hath in great Wrath, yet is it fure and evident that the Winter is past and the Churches Spring begun; and a few steps further off, that Judgment which is now hastning on, will at length end the quarrel; so that by a near converse with the Word, we may clearly see from what point the Churches course and motion this day lies, and how exactly it keeps, in the Certainty thereof, by the clear Conduct of the Scriptures of Truth, where a full Map of her whole Course and Passage through Time is clearly shewed. If. That we may now with some clear Evidence Judge, and have our Faith perswaded hereof, that the Churches Interest is upon the rising Hand, and on a present Advance, though nothing would seem more Contradictory than all visible grounds now are; fance this cannot fail, John 3.30. That Jesus Christ in his Kingdom in the Earth must Increase; yea that the Scripture so clearly Points forth Antichrists Ruine and Progress of his fall and downcasting, with resemblance to that great Judgment on Pharaob as an evident Type here-

of in the same judicial stroats of Induration, on both, and gradual Progress herein by one Plague after another, until the last and greatest Assault, as was then at the Red Sea, hath the same effect for a more glorious appearance of God, in the greatest step of Judgment, and Victory over this Adversary, when not only the Song of Moles, but of the Lamb alfo, shall be then fung, Rev. 15. 3. as importing something more glorious and a greater brightness to be put on this Illustrious Act of Divine Judgment. reserved to these last times, when a more immediate Appearance of the Lord will be seen, than in any former deliverances of his Church. III. It is no Conjectural thing, but what by a clear Scripture Conduck we may see, that this time of the Church now under so notable a Criss in her Case, is evidently falling under that Remarkable Assault and Conflict, with that Adversary, before the accomplishing of that Vial on his Seat and Throne, as we may see Rev. 17. 12, 14. That when so Conspicuous a step of the Churches Victory is near; the Opposition therete also will be in some higher degree proportionable to the same, when the great men of the Earth, and such who shall receive Pomer as Kings, one bour with the Beaft, shall have one Mind, and give their Power and Strength therew, and shall make War with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, &c. Nor is it found through the Scripture where the Lord hath done any great thing for his Church, but some un-usual darkness, and sore-wrestlings have still gone before, and should be no matter of staggering to our Faith, (whatever it be of present Fears, ) to see so dismal a Time of Tryal as now is, and amezing heighth

heighth of trouble beyond what former times have known, when one of the greatest events of Providence in behalf of the Church, fince the revealing of Christ to the World, until his second coming, is affuredly near in the fall and overthrow of the man of Sin. IV. We have clear ground also to judge, that so great an Eclipse as seems almost Universally over the State of the Resormed Churches, is no going down of the Sun thereon, (whatever did befal the most famous Eastern Churches to an utter diffipation thereof;) if these different Periods of time be justly considered, how their Sun-set did then fall in with the Entry of that great Apostacy of the Christian Church and with that long and dismal Night of Ansichrists Reign; whilst now this hour of Trial on the Churches, doth meet in that blessed Period of Antichrists begun fall, and of a growing Light of the Gospel, and when the Scripture so clearly warrants our Faith herein, that the Work of Providence is to Plant, and not cut off, but to bring forward that Interest of the Reformed Churches, in the founding of which the Mediator hath so eminently appeared in the Glory of his Power in these last times. V. It is fure we now live in the Evening, and Extremity of time, when the motions of Providence may be expected to be more quick and speedy, as being fo near the Centre, and to the last Epocha, and Period of all Prophetick Chronology; wherein the Glory of God in his Truth and Faithfulnes shall most eminently shine forth, and these Scripture Truths which were formerly dark and abstrufe, with that Evidence shine forth in the event, as shall cause men to wonder at their former thoughts and stumblings thereat. And here I must say, that there

there is fuch a fight now in the Earth, as the Romish Church, in its Complex frame and state, in so different a mold cast from any Power or Jurisdiction else, and such a Compound of a Civil, and Spiritual Monarchy in one and the same Person, is so solemn and undeniable a Seal to the Christian Faith, and Divinity of the New Test ament; that it's strange why this is not improved more, against the Atheis of this time, that such a visible event of the Scripture is now in being, which was so clearly foretold by the Holy Ghoft 1500. years ago, with its proper Circumstances, as to the manner of that Antichristian state, with its Rise, Growth, and Duration, as is to Admiration still evident to the World, when not the least shaddow or appearance of so strange Future Emergencies was to be seen or could have entred mens Thoughts; to shew it only could be revealed to the Church by him, to whom all his Works are known from the Beginning. This I have looked on, as such a Confirmation to the Truth of Christianity, that no Miracles in the first times of the Church could have more evidence for the same; yea if such a party were not in being, both what it now is and in former Ages hath been, might in another manner stagger the Faith of the Saints, to a questioning the Truth of the Scripture, than its most formidable appearance this day can do. VI, I shall but add here, that we know and are sure the Lord hath reserved his greatest works to these latter days, wherein his Judgments shall be manifest; and that one of the most eminent Manifestations of his Glory before the close of time shall be Conspicuous in the fall of Antichrist, on whose ruines that Glorious House which Christ is yet to have

have for himself both of Jews and Gentiles, shall be prepared and built up; and though this great Echiple of Antichristian Darkness, should yet more prevail, even over the visible Profession of the Truth in the Churches of Britain, and Ireland, there is no cause to be staggered in the Faith of Romes fatal Period, being near, but to look hereon according to the Scripture, as the last attempt of that wounded Adversary, which will be found in the issue to have the most immediate Connexion with his greatest downsal, and the Reviving Glory of the Church; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth ber.

#### SECTION IV.

Qu. WHat is specially called for, in this day, of such as are accountable for so great a Talent of Light, and Confirmations to our Faith?

Ans. If this were suitably taken to Heart, we could not but reckon our selves under the greatest excitement and call, to such an improvement hereof.

I. That we account it not enough to have a Faith, for quieting our own Spirits, but also to confirm others, by putting to our Seal that God is true, in the great Assurances of his Word, and to Sanctiffe bim before the World; which is so important a Duty, as the Lord was wroth even with a Moses, and Aaron for one short-coming, when he called for the same, Numb. 20, 12. and it's sure in no time was such a special trust more reposed thereon, than in this Age, both

both as a publick Debt on the Church, and Personal on each Christian, how to witness for the Lord, upon that great Interest of his Faithfulness and for Transmitting the same, to the Ages to come, by a Confirmatory Seal, and Testimony thereto.

Il. To reckon our selves also under some more than ordinary call this day, (each in their present Capacity and Station, ) to appear for the Gredis of the Truth, and fremm to visible and impetuous a Tide; as is now running of distrust, and of a discreditable faintness; for it may be said; never was the Church under the New Testament so remarkably held under such a Trial, as that wherein the Lord did prove the Church of Israel, Numb. 14. Or had a more evident resemblance thereto, in the same Circumstances as in this day, if they were seriously pondered; As I. How in the same manner, such a false and evil report is too visibly raised upon the blest ways of the Lord, to discourage and faint the Spirits of his People, as was then by the Spres, that there were insuperable difficulties in the way of the Promise, by Reason of the Anakims, and of their walled Cities, and did thus oppose the Credit of Sense, to all these Assurances which God had given to their Faith. II. That this highly dishonourable Cowardice and Distrust did so seize on that People, as was like to resolve in a visible revolt, and to cry for a Leader to go back to Egypt again; which a-mongst too many in this time may be justly feared. III. That this was after such extraordinary Confirmations which the Lord had given to the Faith of his Church then, who had by his own immediate and

out-stretched hand, so lately brought them out of the House of Bondage, and from the Iron Furnace in Egypt, as rendred their misbelief to be a guilt under such Aggravations, as the Holy God did in that manner plead, Vers. 22. These ten times have they tempted me; who have seen my Glory, and my Miracles, which I did in the Wilderness, &c. IV. But herein we hope, and are Confidently fure of a bleffed Disparity in this resemblance, as to the numerousmess of such, who shall be found of the Reformed Churches, to Act something of that part, which these Heroick Witnesses, Caleb and Joshua did; and were, then put to stand alone therein; who through Grace shall yet appear with some measure of that Spirit, and withstand so high a Tide of fears, discouragement and unbelief as is at this day; and thus to plead against the same as these did, Num. 14. 9. If the Lord delight in us, then let us not rebel against him, neither fear the greatest difficulties that can be in the way, &c. V. And is not the same Precedent of Providence, of so singular a respect as the Lord did then testifie to his Caleb and Joshua ( who were of another Spirit in following bim fully, in that day ) a continued Affurance, for all who shall be helped to any honourable appearance of this kind, by making them see, and inherit the Truth of his Promise; yea that such a residue as out-lives this great and amazing storm shall have fomething of that Testimony to bear also, which Caleb gave, Josh. 14. 8, 10. My Brethren which went up with me made the Heart of the People faint, but I fully followed the Lord my God, and now behold the Lord hath kept me alive, &c. O bleffed

bleffed they, whose Souls are raised with that Holy Zeal for the Truth, to stand up in this great breach, by a resolute Profession of their Fairn, and Witness to the Faithfulness of God, as such great and extraordinary Confirmations, given thereto, now call for.

III. It is one of the special Duties of this day we fland also accountable for, how to stemm this high and growing Tide of Prejudice, and Reproach against the Reformed Religion which in some unusual way is now aloft, and raging; and by Manifestation of the Truth to gain some more awful regard hereof on mens Conscience, that they may see something of the Glory of our Profession, and in what manner it maintains its Conquest as no way else can possibly claim; I. Which reckons none to be the true and genuine Professours hereof who imbrace not the same upon Evidence, and with respect to its Intrinsick Excellency and worth; nor does Judge the Interest of Religion to go by number, and poll, where this is. wanting; but pursues that end to have men ingaged first to be Christians, that they may be true and fincere Protestants; and therefore can admit no fuch Methods of any base Compliance with the Humour and Interests of Men, which its Principles will not bear. II. Which in its course is ever regular and Certain, according to the Rule of an Unchangeable and Eternal Truth, without dependence on the will of man herein, or any mutable Revolutions of the Time. III. Which doth with the greatest lustre shine forth in the Brightest Light, and is maintained by the clearest Knowledge; yea by the furthest plainnes, and openness of Heart,

cowards all, commends it self; so that the World may see, it espouseth not mens Affection, before it gains on their Conscience; and it hath their Judgement fixed on a judicious Tryal, before their Resolution; nor accounts the Truth of Religion, can ever subsist by an external shew and Protession, without its known Evidence and the Efficacy thereof on mens Souls. IV. Which sincerely follows the Catholick Interest of Christianity and publick good of Mankind, in promoting the great Ends of the Gospel, so as the World may see its highest Intent is to exalt all Divine Institutions, and advance the Simplicity, and Spirituality of Gospel Admini-strations, (according to the revealed Rule) amongst Men, as that which doth most nearly concern the Vitals of Religion and an Inward Life of Communion with God. V. Which Pleads an Impartial. Tryal of all its Adversaries, whether the Principles -of our Profession or of Popery, give the greatest Security to Civil Government, and founds the strongest Obligations to Magistracy and to all Civil, and Moral Duties, by which the awe and venerable esteem of Religion is kept up in a Nation. It is high time that men should cease to be implicite, and become express upon this greatest Interest they have within time, which is the Truth of their Profession in the matter of Religion; when a Deceir or Mistake here is of an Eternal Concern: Upon which account, without respect to Interest, Party, or Education, I have this day sought to know the Truth, and what Adversaries could possibly pretend, to Reproach, or Prejudge any for the Reformed Religion; All they can do, is but to charge mens Corruption and Offences in their Practice, upon the Rule and Principles of their Professon, that can never give the least Latitude, or Connivance thereto, but is eleast as the Sun; when on the other hand I could know no other way, to imbrace such a Profession, as Popery, but by turning Atheist, in the first Place, and then quitting both Religion and Reason at once: But I can say, in a resolute Adherence to the Dockrine of the Resonmed Church, I sear not to adventure my Soul, and enter into an Exernal State.

## AN

# IDEA;

Of the Confirmed State of a Chriftian in Difmal and Shaking Times.

Ho' the Measure of all Christians Establissment in the Truth be not alike, but must have respect to their different Trials, Talents, and Improvements for this end; yet may it cause Astonishment to see, how rare any Study of this kind is now to be found. When it's not only one of the highest concerns of Christianity, but in a more than ordinary way called for, as the Work of this day; yea, being this is a part of Religion, which feems leaft improved of any, for the more general State of Profellours within the Church; under some Conviction hereof, was this Essay designed; wherein with humble Confidence (I may say) the Truth hath been fought with that Serious Enquiry into the Nature of these things held forth, as I judged needful for such, who have so great an Interest, and Adventure not only through Time, but for all Eternity, to support themselves upon the alone Certainty hereof, and ere these days of Trial, which we now fee, pass over G 2

this Generation, it may be found this was not unfeafonable, or without cause directed to such a time,
if the Lord graciously bless the same; nor will it
(I hope) be found unnecessary to present yet further, some clear prospect of a Confirmed State in Religion, and what those ought to be, who with Light,
and Assurance of Mind are like to followishe Lord
fully, in such a day; which is here offered in a seven
fold Character, under which a truly Confirmed Christiam in the Truth of his Prosession may be Stated.

CHARACTER I. He is one who shath amther Sence, and Impression of this great Study for attaining to a Confirmed State in Religion, and is on higher grounds pressed to follow the same, than most of the Visible Church do apprehend; and should be

thus Confidered.

Profession is in the highest Degree dear, and who would have the World see, that such as imbrace the same, and do most fully Adventure on the Testimony of God in his Word, are those who walk on the highest Principles of true, and enlighted Reason; yea, who take deeply to Heart that Obligation which is on all, who desire to advance the Repute, and Honour of the Truth, to be in such Terms therewith upon its own Evidence, that they may know how to Consute and Shame Atherst, and Insidels, if called thereunto.

2. Who see also, that such is the State of faller Man, as stands in need of all the Contributions that can be, not only to strengthen the Christians Faith, to bear out against the strong Assaults of Infidelity, but to gain also more Credit and Veneration to the Truth, with those who are not easily dealt with, but by

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Such means as bear some Congruity to their Natural Light, and Reason; for which end the Lord hath astorded his Ministerial helps, to render the Unbelief of the World, and all pretence of Hesitation about his Truth more inexcusable.

2. He also sees, that the most important, and Fundamental Truths of Christianity, need the greatest Confirmation in his Faith; and those who enter. isto so high and discriminating a Profession from the refidue of the World, need to know in what manner they embrace the same. He sees that the natural Order of things does absolutely require to have the Fourdation sure laid, on which so great a superstructure must rest, so as he judgeth it a Work by st felf, and to need some peculiar retiring his Soul in the most serious recess, and Composure thereof, to attain a fedfastness in the Truth, and to know the strong and firm Conveyances of that greatest Mystery of the Gospel, in such a manner, as needs not a new Miracle to Confirm the fame. But he knows that no sharpness of mens Natural Understanding about the Truth can ever attain a true Reft, and Settlement of Mind therein, without an bumble, and ferious Spirit stooping down before the Wisdom of God, and entring as a little Child into his School s and by that humble Practice, and Obedience of the Gospel, there is an undoubted coming up to the greatest Assurance and clearest Demonstrations of the same, as Job. 7. 17.

4. He knows that as nothing tends more to shake Mens Spirits, and stagger them about the Truth, than a Light and Transsent View hereof, so does the greatest Establishment sollow, on the nearest approach by a deep and serious Enquiry about the same s

and he clearly fees that if such who look but at a diffance on the way of Religion, did but once come to have their Spirits exceed in a more serious Resection thereon, the first view they should have, could not but be matter of Wonder, and Amazement; to think what can support a Soul in so marvellous a way as the Life and Practice of Christianity; Which is so visibly above Nature, and that wherein they must do violence to the same, wherein they must part with the Multitude, and oppose themselves to the frongest Tide of Example, and must endure also in Hope, and believe for things not som, ( which were never the Object of Humane Sence,) to any in this Earth; and are oft called to part with the most defirable things of Sence, upon the alone Credit of their Faith; yes, wherein they must enter that Profession, on no other Terms, then to be Martyrs for the same, and Seal it with their Blood; so that he must needs see a Christian according to the Rule and Institution of the Gospel, to be the greatest Riddle, and Wonder of any fight within time; but when such come more close and near upon this Trial, and have once understood the Nature and greatpess of that Security which these have to adventure on, and what is the Glory of their Hope, and the fure Spring of their Supplies, for their Work and Trials within time; then will this second wonder unspeakably exceed the first; how it's possible that fuch are not of a more raifed, and enlarged Spirit, in the service of the Gospel, in that short season they have here for it on the Earth, and how their difficulty should not be more, to bear the Joy of so great a Prospect, and Expectation, than to bear any prefent Griefs and Troubles. Yea how a mans Life,

who indeed fincerely makes the Christian Profession, is not in some more continued transport of ranvishment and mondering, to know that they are sureally made for their Eternal State in another World, and are among those, on whom the glorious God hath chosen to have the exceeding Riches of his Grace shewed forth, in the Regions of Blessedness above for ever.

5. He hath another fight and prospect of the Christian Creed, than most who give an easie Assent thereunto; and hath his Reason so dazled with the Revelation of the Gospel, and of the Wonders thereof as bath put him to fuch an Exercise as that 2 Chron. 6. 18. How to Credit his Eyes therewith, the more deep Reflection he hath upon the same; But will God in very deed dwell with men on the Earth? He judgeth that they, who after some fluctureting suspence, are admitted to see the Truth of Christianity, with that Certainty of its Evidence, as the greatness of such a discovery does require; may have some resemblance to that transport which the Angels had at the first Creation; when the Morning Stars Sung together, and the Sons of God shouted for Joy; to see themselves thus, who were brought out of pure nothing, entred into that ineffable Light of leeing God, and also their own blessedness in him, in so high a degree. So that he accounts it one of the highest Attainmenrs of Religion, for a Christian indeed to believe the Articles of bis own Faith, and have his Soul as fully perswaded hereof, as of his being; that fuch a time affuredly was, (and is now many Ages since past,) when the glerious Redoemer of the Church, the second Person of the God head came down from Heaven, and was revealed

vealed in our Nature; that on him, as Surety to Divine Justice in the room of the Elect Church, was the whole Guilt, and Sin thereof transferred; and in this marvellous way did the Holy God take Satisfaction to Himself, by Himself; that thus our Nature is exalted, by the Incarnation of Christ above the Nature of Angels; that the time is near when the meanest afflicted Christian, shall take in no other Air, than the Breathings of the bigher Paradise above, and now hath an Eternity of Joy, and Bleffedness before him; that within a very little time he shall know this welcome of our blest Redeemer to his Followers here on the Earth, Come ye blefsed of my Father inherit the Kungdom, &c. When he shall take off the Cross, and put on the Crown, when it shall be then no more a matter of Faith, but of Sence, to be Partaker of that Inheritance with the Saints in Light; and know those Proper Manfions in that State of Glory, and peculiar Affignment thereunto, which all the Redeemed shall then have ; and be put in the same rank with the Elect Angels; to be as those pure flames of Love, and Joy; yeaknow what it is to walk in the Streets of the New Jerusalem which are as Gold, Transparent as Chrifal; and what that meeting will be of his Soul Perfected, and in a Triumphant State, with his Glo-rified Body, raised incorruptible, and never to part any more; and to have his proper share of that blessed and greatest Solemnity, that shall be celebrated in Heaven; the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, with the whole Triumphant Church; and hear that honourable account which the great Judge will then make of these Trials of his Faith, and sharp conflicts which he had gone through within time; with

with that selemn Testimony of Approbation, which will be given hereof! And since it's sure these great things must be a part of the Christian Faith; can it be strange, that such, as would in that manner converse therewith (tho they be not yet seen) as no less undoubted Realities than any present Objects of Sense, cannot be easily satisfied with a low degree of Evidence and Confirmation of their Judgment; but would have their Joy persected so far as this State of Mortality can bear; and so find it easie to Rejaice, and Glory in Tribulation, and to weep now for a Season, who are to rejoyce for ever; yea to say in the Words of Mephibosheth, Let them take it all, and enjoy the same, since he who is their Life, and Exceeding Joy, Lives and Reigns, who is Infinitely better to them than all these things.

6. He accounts the Strengthning of his Faith, to be such a concern, not only as it is his Souls Adventure for all Eternity, but as the highest way of Glorifying God here: That whatever tends to a more sull Confirmation of the same, he reckons also one of the greatest Additions to his for and Comfort within time; and that these manifold Assistances (with such Reduplication thereof) which the Lord hath himself given for this end, are such that no Fragments of so rich a Talent should be lost; and the he knows the greatest Demonstrations of our Faith can add nothing to the Certainty of Divine Truth in it self; yet are they thus given in regard of the strong Trials of a Christians Lite, and of what their weaknesses stand in need of for support.

7. It's in this Study, he sees and takes to Hearr, how not only the Condition of Adan in the Earth, but the Profession of Christ also calls for such a reckoning,

koning, that he may have Triels in that manner dispensed, that no wishle refuge will be found in the Jeaft to fland by him, but all humane Comfort and Affistance will fail him, so that he must needs lay in Ballast now in its Season, and be founded thereon with that Affurance of Judgment, as is needful for that Day, when he must either got through in the alone way of Believing, against Sence, or Perish. And tho no such Arrainments of Light can bear out then, without present, and immediate Influences from above, and that it is sure according to the Day, so must the Christians Strength be, yet does he see also, the want of an established Judgment, and of some proper fleck laid up of Aids, and Affifances this way against a sharp Storm, is like to make sad work among the Professours of this Age, ere the Trials of fuch a time have done their work.

8. He sees also how the greatest Contest, which is this day in the World, is between God, and Man, upon the Truth and Assurance of his Word; and that the highest Trial, and Probation of a Christian, in which all the Trials of his Life do still meet, may be resolved here; if they receive the Testimony of God in his Word as an absolute Security to relie on yea or not. And the this is the peculiar Glory of the only true God, to have an absolute Dependance of his whole Work on himself, and to be the alone Centre of his Peoples rest; yet may nothing be more eviden, than that with most he bears that Name, of being their truft; when the whole burden and weight znereot lies alone upon visible grounds; so that those Bonds, and Promises which he hath himself given unto men, do bear no more Credit, than they have fome External Surety of in the Earth, which they Aill

fill look after, to fland as it were good and re, fible for the same, which is the highest Indignay be offered to the glorious Majesty of God.

9. He does much take to Heart this present riod of time, wherein the fluctuating suspence, balting of so many under a visible Profession of Truth, is now one of the most dismal Signs ber and that it seems to be the time, wherein the I will in an unusual way take this Generation off any implicite Profession of the same ; and when great Roll of Visible Professors in all the Refor Churches, may be ere long in that manner calle each must answer to bis own Name; and be put to ! to the Proof before the World; when no Tem Interest, but Internal Mosives and Certainty o Truth upon its own Evidence, must bear one yea that the most establish may ere long find i easie to be kept from Staggering; and a few come in the Churches way, more remarkable Trial, than have been in some Ages before.

CHARACT. II. A truly confirmed Chris may be thus also stated, as one who is in the place most deeply taken up about that rare Pla Mans Redemption; and to see these great, and deeful Truths there, not fingly, and apart, but in Harmony, Order, and Consent of all the parts the as they are limbt together in this marvellous fra so make the whole one entire piece. And we of no part does in the least interfere with ano Which he finds to be one of the most Principal monstrations of this great Mystery of the Go which the Lord hath given for Constraing his ples Faith. And thus in another manner than merly, can be now entertain his Soul herew

and have his Joy unspeakably heightened. 1. Tofee at once the ruined State of fallen Man, and what a Flood-gate of all Evil is let loose on Adams Race, not only Morally in Sin, but what is Penal in the Woe, and Miseries thereof; yea such a State, where all Hope of relief is for ever cut off in the way of Nature, or by any created help; and where the Execution of a Righteons Sentence on men for the voluntary Violation of a Law, Just, Holy, and Good, can be no Impeachment (in the least) of the Righteoulness of God; But then therewith he does see such a relief brought to Light, as can not only answer the whole extent of this ruin, but the Glory of God more eminently displayed therein, than if the Law had been obeyed, or absolutely executed in its Penalty on the whole race of man. Yea, ( which makes this more wonderful,) to see a higher Dispen-(ation of Grace unto man, now under the Golpel, than was to Adam in his Primitive State; whereby innumerable Christians are made to endure and prevail over stronger Assaults, than broke him even in his Integrity; which is a thing so marvellous, that. the great and Infinite God only could find out and effect it. 2. He does now see how clear a Consstence and Harmony is here, that he who had no. Sin by Inhefion, but was Holy, harmless, and Undefiled, should be under the greatest weight of Sin by Imputation; and by the exactest Rule of Divine Tuffice, be made liable to answer both the whole Duty, and full Penalty of the Law; having, as Surety betwixt the Creditor and Debtor, put himself in his Peoples room, to answer the full demands thereof both for Debt, and Duty. 3. It is here he does fee that bleft Confent and Harmony betwirt the spot-

spotles Justice of God, and his marvellous Grace; so as his Love is to the highest glorified, in that marvellous way, which secures the full and compleat Satisfaction of his Law, and all the rights of inviolable Juffice. 4. Whilft he is thus dazled with the greatness of such a Light, and put to enquire what fuch a mystery can mean, he is then further led on to see that rare Plot and Contrivance of the Covenant of Reconciliation between God, and Man, here within time; to be the very Duplicate, and Counterpart of that Eternal Transaction, and Stipulation between the Father and the Son; and thus sees whatever God hath declared, and promised in the former to his Church, was first promised, and secured to our Bleffed Head in the Covenant of Redemption; wherein as with a Reverend and Awful Distance, so with the greatest Evidence of Light he is made to see here these reciprocal Obligations between them, and mutual Trust for making good the whole Terms thereof in the appointed time. 5. He does also clearly fee that rare Order, and Harmony of time in these fignal Periods of the Revelation of this great Mystery of Christ, which from its more dark Discovery, and Dawning, did still more gloriously open its self to the Church; by a gradual Light, and unvailing of the same, as the Sun in its Course unto the perfect day; yea he hath his Faith thus unspeakably confirmed, to see herewith the Gospel Church being still the same, whither of Jews or Gentiles; and how that Series, and Confent hath yet never been broken off fince the beginning of a Church called forth from the Residue of Mankind, set apart as a peculiar People for the Lord; where none ever had Right and Priviledge to be Members of the same, but

but by Faith in the Messies, and Profession of their.
Obedience to his Laws.
6. It is in this Union and Harmony, he sees all the Branches, and Parts of Gospel Obedience mest exactly meet, and terminate, to advance both the greatest Excellency and Blessedness of Man, and Assemilate him to the Blessed Image of God. Yea, how all the Rules, and Precepts there-of do so entirely Conspire for this end, as may constrain the World to see, and admire the Glerious Nature, and Perfections of him, whose Laws these are, wherein he does so brightly thine forth. 7. Nor can be look seriously herein, and not see that sweet soncord as a part of this Harmony, which is betwirt the Premissory, and Mandatory part of the Gaspel; so as the Christians Comfort is most fully established. and no Duty abolished; but the very Path-road to the most full Enjoyments of the Promise, and proper way to attain reft, and tranquillity of Spirit, must be ever by taking on the yoke of Christ. 8. Yea (to Confirm this entire Union, and Harmony more fully,) he now fees that exact and marvellous Correspondence which is betwirt that first Fundamental Promise of the Messies, and the Event; betwint all the Ancient Figures and Types of the Levisical Service, and the Revelation of Christ bimfelf, in which all these did meet as in their proper Centre, and now have their full End and Accomplishment. 9. His Confirmation thus grows to fee that wondertul Consent of Christianity, and Native result hereof, to put fallen man in a due posture towards God, towards his Neighbours, and towards himfelf; to as he may know by Faith and Adviction how to enjoy God, and his Brother, by Love; and thus by Postence, Meckness, and Humility, to possess bis own

Soul and enjoy himself. 10. Yea it is in this rare and wonderful frame, he is made to see ( and no fight can be like this) that exact correspondence which is betwixt the Foundation and Superfructure, how the whole Tract of the Gospel is but one Entire and Complext means to Glorifie God, and reftore fallen Man to the highest Blessedness? How that excellent Stream of Santification, does flow from that Fountain Head of an Eternal Decree; which does still run under the Ground, until it break up at last in the Heart of each Christian, by the Effectual Call of the Geffel; and thus runs down through time until it lose its self in that unconceivable deep of Perfe-Etion and Glory. Thus is it that each Christian might attain some higher Degrees of Confirmation in bis Faith, than most seem either to know, or look after, if he understood more how to improve this rare comparing work of Religion by setting the great Truths and Principles thereof in their Order, and Dependance, so as each may be seen, in its necessisry Coberence with other, and under its proper afpect.

But the more deep Reflection and Enquiry he hath herein, he is the more made to wonder, and finds this one of the great Affaults to his Faith? that the Revelation of Christ, and Redemption by his Blood should have no greater effects this day amongst men, and that the Christian World is not in some other manner awakned with the Glory of this Light, and prest after a larger spreading and Dissuspense of this highest and universal good to poor mankind; Yea the more he considers this, it doth heighten his Amazement to think how mens designs in the matter of Duty and Service for the Kingdom of Christ, can be so low within time, whose Designs and Hopes

in the close thereof are to high in the matter of Enjoyment; or take so little to heart, that the whole Day of the dispensation of the Gospel, (amidft the most dismal Tryals that may fall in therewith,) is a continued time wherein we are called to keep the Feaft, and from one Age to another celebrate the same, as a perpetual Jubilee of Joy, and Exultation, since Christ our Passover was sacrificed for its; but oh how rare a thing feems this to be, and how little of that flame and fervency of Love to our Bleffed Redeemer is now kindled on his Altar? Such as might be expected on such wonderful neitements thereto, and which once were in the Church.

CHARACT. III, Though a Confirmed Chrifian must be specially stated as such, one who knows the Internal part of Religion, and Sealing work of the Holy Ghost on his own Soul, which is not by words, but things of the highest Truth, Substance, and Reality; yet is he not satisfied to know this by Spiritual Sense until he can see the same with the furthest Evidence of Light also to his mind; and have no less a clear and judicious Tryal of this great Mystery of Experimental Religion, for confirmation of his Faith, than to be fensibly affected with the felt power thereof. And in the first place why this is necessarily requisite and called for, with respect to the Confirmed State of a Christian, may be thus considered, on some few grounds.

1. That the things of Religion, which must be expersenced within time, are such sublime, and mouderful Mysteries, as may be just matter of astonishment, and make men a wonder to themselves, to think that these present Pledges of so great a hope which is to come, are no shadows, no appearances of things,

things, but most sure, and undoubted realities; and that such there are this day in the Earth, who know so near a converse with an Invisible God, and the supernatural Truths of his Word, with the sensible seeling of the inestimable Love of Christ, by this demonstration of Experience; yea, who in such dismal Times do assuredly know what the Joy of his Presence, and an immediate Fellowship with their blessed Head is, upon the greatest certainty of Tryal; since these are so high, and marvelous things, which exceed all Natural Understanding, as the felt Sweetness of their enjoyment should not more deeply take men up, than to see the Truth, and Sureness of these Principles, whereon they build.

2. Because this Testimony of the Truth of Experimental Religion, should be understood not only as it's of highest use for Christians Personal Comfort, and Establishment; but with respect to the Publick Interest of the Church; a special duty it is to have the Credit of this greatest Testimony, and Seal, demonstrably cleared, with the furthest strength of barmonious, and argumentative Reason, for such who look but at a distance yet thereon; which may not only awaken them to some deeper sense, and impression hereof, but constrain them to see, how no Natural Science hath more clear, and firm demonstrations, than the Experimental part of Christianity, (which is the very Life and Soul thereof,) may have to mens Reason, and Judgment, the they never knew it within themselves. Yea for this end should fuch, as have experienced the Truth, and Vertue of the Gospel, reckon themselves as Witnesses; who are judicially obliged to put their Seal thereunto; and is now more called for, in an Age when no particular Truth

Truth seems more strongly impugned, than the Reality of Experimental Godliness is; and become as a Publick Theam of Derision; tho' men must either quit the whole Revelation of the Scripture, or see this to be as Essential to the Constitution of a Christian, as Vital Principles are to a Living Man.

3. Yea it's sure herein, that such as take Religion to heart, must needs look to be put to the greatest Tryal of its Certainty, and should most nearly concern themselves, to know if they can abide as firmly by their Spiritual Seuse, as by that which is Natural; and do know as surely in themselves the Operations, and Motions of a Spiritual Life, as that they have being by Nature; and that here be no doubtful or abstract Notions but which have haddeep Tryal, and Reflexion on them; that they who dare to venture their Eternal State on the known certainty thereof, do Reason their Souls to a stedfast adherence to the Truth, when they are called to facrifice their Lives thereto; to wit, from the Rare Experiments, and Proofs, they have oft had of the same in their own Tryal.

4. It doth more specially call for a demonstrative clearing of the Credit of this Testimony, as one of the Services of Religion, to promote the Kingdom of Christ amongst men, which seems least improved of any with respect to the general State of such who are within the Church, who are so great strangers to the same; yea should be judged one of the great wants of this day, when Atheism is now at so associately and the Experimental part of Religion, (which in it self lies deep and hid, and is a secret betwint God and the Christians Soul,) with such clearness, and

by that manner of Evidence demonstrated to the World, as might tend to beget some more Awful Sense and Conviction hereof, (when such clear and unanswerable grounds might be improved for this end) on those who look thereon as some strange and dark Riddle, so as they could no more deny, or withstand the Evidences hereof, than that they have a Living Soul which yet they never saw; or could ever be the Object of Human Sense. And how sad a prospect should this give of the greatest part of the Christian World? Who not only know nothing of the True Glory, and Spiritual Powers of Christianity, but have not the very Nation, or any Sense of the reality of such a thing.

But in the 2d place it is thus that each Christian, for being solidly confirmed in the Way of Religion, may as classly see, as he does sembly feel, the Truth of his own Experience, and have his Faith as fully established by this inward, and great demonstration of the things of God, as his Affections are quickened, upon such strong, and demonstrative grounds of the

certainty hereof, as thele are.

1. By considering his present, and former State; that not in a dream, but in the most deep and serious composure of spirit, he knows that once he was blind, and wholly estranged from this Mystery of Christian Experience, which now he does see; and once had the same sentiment hereof with such who do never at all resect on the same; but no sooner did the Truth, and Power of Religion seize on his Soul, than he sound himself entred into a new World, to know the dawnings of this marvelons Light, and what belongs to these Enjoyments, and Vital Acts of Christianity, that have not the least dependance on any Natural Cause. H

2. By confidering the marvelous Superstructure of Experimental Religion, which from the inward obfervation of Christians in all Ages, is such as the World could not almost contain the Books, that might be which yet is so entirely founded on one, and the fame Foundation, and does in all the Lines of this great Circumference, still meet in the Same Center; yea thus how entire, and barmonioue a thing Religion in all the parts thereof is within upon the Soul, as well as without; so as every fep in this way of the Experience of the Saints is no groping in the dark, but what is by Line and by Rule, with as fure, and demonstrable a connexion with the External Testimony of the Word, as there is in Nature betwixt the Cause, and the Effect; which affords a more wonderful affiftance to his Faith, than the greatest External Miracles could ever do; and the' the Spirit of God does sometimes in an extraordinary manner reveal himself to men, (as acts of bis Soveraign Prerogative which make no Rule) yet with the Established Constitutions of his Word does the continued Experience of the Saints most harmoniously ever correspond.

3. By confidering thus also the Being, and Reality of Grace, not in its Effects only, but in its proper Cause and Original, and how the Truth of Holiness in the Life of a Christian is so express a Transcript of the Gospel, in its External Revelation; that the Impress doth not more clearly answer the Seal on the Wax, than it doth beget the same Form and Image of it self in such as believe; yea also that conformity it bears to the ever blassed Archetypa, as well as to the Revealed Rule; and how bright a discovery is this of so glorious a Being, and Nature, to

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which it's conformed? Who is the alone Battern, and Example of all Truth and Holines; which is so great a discovery, as he is made to wonder, that men in this Age are so much awaken'd to find out the true Phoenomena of Nature, (tho' in its own room a most choice study, and specially desirable,) and will be as in a Transport, upon some rare Natural Experiment, as made one in that manner cry out, suppose suppose, Libiave found, I have found; whilst here is another kind of demonstration, and of more transcendent interest than all these could ever amount to, on which the Eyes of most are this day shut.

4. By considering that Unchangeable Congruity, which as betwirt the nature of these things, enjoyned in the whole Institutions of the Gospel, and mens being made happy thereby, now in their present state; and how great a Temporal Revenue of the Fruits of Religion, as inward Considence, Peace, and Serenity of Adind, doth as natively follow the life, and practice hereof, as the Fruit of a Tree answers to its kind; and is ever found the alone true relief of Mankind, against all the griefs and bitterness of time; yea that it's no distance of place, but of mens spirit by impurity, and corruption, that makes so sad a distance betwirt God and Man here in the Earth.

7. He is thus further confirmed upon this great Testimony of Experimental Religion, by considering that it's sure tech as do bear this witness are known; 1. To be such who are of the most discerning, and judicious in the things of Reason, as well as any else. 2. Whose walk and practice use to have the greatest Authority over mens Consciences with whom they converse. 3. Who are found most intensly taken up in the retired work, and duties of Religion; that can have

have no respect to the witness, and observation of others. 4. Who feek no Implicit Credit from any herein; but do pray men to come, and see, and prove the fame in their own Experience; with an appeal to the most exact Inquiry, and rational Tryal of all Mankind, if here be any calual thing; and if that Testimony of the Doctrinal, and Experimental part of Religion be not still one, and the same. 5. Who also out of the most remote places of the Earth, and otherwife strangers amongst themselves, do yet most harmoniously meet in the same Witness, and are thus mutually disclosed to each other, by a near, and feeling intercourse of their Souls, from such an Oneness in a Spiritual State, and those Specifick Properties of a Spiritual, and New Nature, with as discernible evidence, as if one man should meet with another of the same kind, in such a place of the Earth, which were only inhabited with Beafts.

6. By confidering also, (with a deep and serious reflection hereon,) that fure and known Conjunction, which is betwirt the most rare Experiences of a Christians Life, and the most fearthing Tryals thereof, with that uniform Consent that hath in all Ages of the Church been, in such marvelous things, as these. 1. What solemn Tokens and Testimonies of the Love of God, and his Acceptance, are found usually to meet his People in the entry of some green Tryal, or Service for him; even in some unusummanner then, in the sense whereof, as it was with Elijab, they have been made to go many days after in a Wilderness-flates, yea how this does not respect Persons only, but Churches; that the Word still wieth to go before with some remarkable confirming work, to secure the heart before the Cross, and some special Tryal of.

of Perfecution comes, 2. That as each day hath its proper burden, and work, so hath itits proper allowsnee provided for the fame; which should be no less fought after by a Christian, than his daily Bread, and when the pressure of such a day grows to some more fingular height; so also should the expence hereof be in Faith fought for, and expected. 3. How the choicest Mercies are reserved to the saddest Times of a Christians Lot; and most usually cross to their own choice, and they have had the greatest struglings with those Methods of Providence, which in the issue tended most to their Advancement. 4. Yea how the returns of a long deferred hope after much humble waiting have been to them, as a Pifgab, whence they have not only had a clear, and comforting prospect of their by-past Tryals, but have been more fully confirm'd for the time to come; and can bear now that Testimony, that the Lord bath cleared all past things to them, and hath taken the Vail off his work, which for long had been as a dark and strange Riddle.

7. This likewise gives a most clear, and confirming prospect of that great Seal of Experience, when he can now see, both in his own case, and of others, what the issue of believing in a singular Exigency, and Tryal, and upon some special act of trust, and adventure berein, does at last come to; which, the more deeply it's considered, he finds one of the most peculiar assistances to but Faith, and one of the ereatest attainments of Experimental Religion withinting, when he can thus see the same way of believing, (in some strong and extraordinary assaults,) which he hath found to crush and break him herein; which hath carried so many thorow in their saddest Tryals; bring him also in his turn, to be an instance in the same kind,

to bear an honourable Testimons to this site, and excellent way of believing before the World, that none may tear, after sim, to hold by the premise if God, and venture on that security, (tho' it then seem against hope,) whose Dispensations, did yet never never give his Word the lye.

CHARACT. IV. He is a truly confirmed Christian, who in a dismal time, is not staggered in his Faith from the present signs, and appearances thereof, but hath his Soul ballasted with such solid grounds of confirmation against the same, that those Providences, whereat others do most sumble, tend to his surther strengthening in the way of the Lord, when he does

now clearly fee;

1. How Tribulation, and the Cross make one of the most illustrious, and beautiful parts of the whole frame of Providence about the Church, and in the Lot of each Christian; so as there can be no possible stumbling to any for want of Light here, that fore Tryals, and Diffres should most remarkably follow those in their Journey, who have an Eternal Bleffedness before them in the close hereof; when so great a part of the Scripture is directed not only for comfort, but for clear conduct of the Christians Faith, through all the intricacies and labyrinths of such a dispensation. He fees how highly congruens it is to the Infinite Wifdom of God, that so strait and narrow a way, in fuch a frate of Tryal as is here, should go before the state of everlasting enjoyment; that there should be fisch a Stage, and Theatre also, whereon the passive Graces of the Spirit, may not only be exercised, but displayed in their true lastre, and glory before Angels, and men. Yea, that thus the Redeemed of the Lord should. be full trained in so sharp a Warfare, as may not only

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put a due value, and respect on the greatness of that Triumph, and Reward which is to come, but be matter of meffable Joy, and Exultation, that ever they were admitted thus to evidence their Lave and Adherence to their bleffed Head, and his Trush here on the Earth; and accounted worthy to be put on some botter fervice, and to peculiar Tryals, and Genflitts this way beyond others, for some example, and encouragement to the Church in their day; and here also he can now fee how the greatest enjoyments of Comfort, are more owing to the most sharp, and affileling Tryals of their Life, than to the greatest external Calm; and that to endure pariently, and Suffer for the name Chrift, is such a Priviledge as the Elect Angels have not been admitted to. Yea, that the Lords chastning work, and forest smiting of his own, is an Act also of saving; so that thus, the more deeply he searcheth here, the more does he fee, admire, and confent to that glorious piece of the administration of Providence about the Church; and finds it to be one of the greatest Confirmations of his Faith within time.

1. He does now clearly the how the Truth, and

I. He does now clearly see how the Truth, and Faithfulness of God is commensurate to his whole work of Providence; and that all the Lines hereof, as they do lead from his Revealed Counsel in the Scripture, (which is the adequate sign of his Eternal Counsel, and Decrees,) so do they return thither again, to make this great demonstration clear; that if a full History were written of this World, and what hath been conspicuous thorow the whole series of times past in all these Conjunctions of Inferiour Causes, (whether necessary; free, or contingent, and of such Events that seem most casual,) it should be nothing else but an exact Transcript, and History of the Bible, to bear

this witness, That the World is nothing but God fee forth in his own Scripture Light. But the a full discovery hereof be not attainable within time, yet is it a sad, and deplorable want, that the great As of the Lord, in each Age of the Church, are not more searched, and sought out of all them that take pleasure sbereins hat they may be feen, observed, and admired, by that part of the Creation, Angels, and Men, who are only in a capacity to know the same. Which is a Service for the Lord, wherein his Praise, and Declarative Glory is so highly concerned, that a Christian should account the meanest Room herein, one of the most desirable Attainments within time. Yea it seems just matter of regret also that this comes not under a more publick Care, and notice of Particular Churches, and of the Christian Magistrate, (where Religion hath any true regard, ) to have fuch folemn Providences as occur in that time, and place, which may be called most Instructive Providences to the Church, (and of a further reach, and extent than any Private use.) both Search'd after, and Recorded; as becomes so high a Service to the Chri-Rise Cause, and one of the highest concerns of Po-Berity, in Ocder to have them not only possessed of a pure Religion, but of that Seal also, which the Lord hath in the great Acts of Providence appended thereto. And thus to have that Increase, which each Successive Age brings therewith to the publick Stock of the Church, looked after, as a piece of the greatest trust reposed thereon; so that the Children rife not up and say, we have not beard, nor bave our Fathers faithfully communicated to us the wondrous Works which the Lord bath wrought in their time.

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3. He is thus also taught to see the Demonstrative Causes of the most strange Judgments on the Church, to be as clear in the Scripture as they are in the event. And though the Holy God, in the day of his Patience, and Long-suffering, is not slike quick in the Execution of the Sentences of his Word; yet does he ever establish the Authority of bis Laws by the works of his Providence in the most opportune scason, and as Judgment deferred is no acquittance, so does it more threaten its being the greater, when it comes, than a quick and prefent dispatch; yea though this tempest which now blows on the Churches of Christy come to a greater beight; and the darkness be such, as no Moon, or Stars may for many days yet appear of any Visible figns of Hope; yet is his Soul thus at rest, whilst he can see the Credit of the Trush cleared, on which he hath more in trust than any Adventure within time; and doth rejoyce, whatever miscarrying there may be of Inferiour Ends, that this great, and ultimate End of the works of God is secured herein; and the Glory of his Truth does thine forth in the most trange and amazing Alls of his Providence, whereat many are ready to stagger, when they do not wifely confider the same.

4. He sees now likewise, so high a value which the Lord puts on the Trial of his Peoples Faith, and that the great dispensation whereby he deals with men, is by trust, and on the credit of his Word, as it adds surther so his Consirmation, to see all humane, and Visible Resuges of taken out of his Churches sight. Yea his greatest works in the Earth make the greatest delay ere they be brought forth, and his Churches Case is put so far beyond help before a cure, as the first quickning of her crushed, and almost dead hope,

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must best the mouth of the Grave; and he is thus herein more singularly strengthned, that when the Lord speaks the same in the way of Providence, which he hath spoke in his Word, [not by Might nor by Power,] that he doth with unspeakable Advantage supply, and fill the room thereof by the next Word, [but by my Spirit saith the Lord.] Which in this day should with a full Assurance of Faith be both sought and looked after.

5. It is in this rare Study he attains also the greatest Confirmention to his Faith; that could possibly be defined within time; to see now when it's so near the close thereof, and after all the Revolutions of times past, how the Truth and Faithfulness of God, bath (as the Sun in its Strength,) still kept its way straight and fixt amidst all those dark Clouds, which have been to darken the same, and is now gone its course, until it draws near to the full, and perfect day; yea thus to see now signally this present Age is held upon that same appeal, andd solemn Testimony which Joshua gave, Josh. 22, 14. That not one thing bath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass to you, and not one thing hath failed thereof; and Solomon did bear also at the Dedication of the Temple, I Kings 8. 56. Blessed be the Lord that bath given rest unto his People Israel, according to all that be promised, there hath not failed one Word of all his good Promofe, which he promised by the hand of Moses his Servant; so is this now that great Testimony of the latter days, and the highest Tribuse of Praise to the Glory of God in his Truth, which can be given by men, that this present Seneration stands accountable to make the same, yea much greater appeal to the World, if they can instance .,

instance one Promise or Prediction of that sacred record of the Scripture which hath ever failed or fallen to the ground, but may be this day read in the Event, and under those proper circumstances wherein it was to take place in its proper Scason, as evidently as it was foretold. And must kill bear the same witness, Pfal. 18. 30 That the way of the Lord is perfect, and his Word tryed on all the Adventures of Faith, and Trials which to this moment of time have been made hereof, and of his being still a Buckler to such as trust in him, and are called to fend this glorious Testimony to the succeeding Ages, that it may never cease to shine or want a publick witness thereto before Angels and Men, until the whole mystery of God in his Word be finished, in that magnificent close which shall be thereof at the second Coming of the Lord.

CHARACT. V. A Confirmed Christian in this day should be thus also flated, as one who hath not only attained a folid rest and settlement of Mind, upon the Certainty of the Christian Faith, but does know the pure genuine Truth of Christianity, amidst such high Oppositions betwixt the Romssh, and Reformed Church herein.

And in the first place hath in this manner held him-

felf upon such a trial; I. As one who knows there is but one true, and faving Religion in the Earth, to which God hath annexed the Promise of Eternal Life. which can never be divided against it self. 2. Who knows that within a little while his Religion will be tried in the Truth thereof, at the Iribanal of Christs where every man must give account of bimself unto God. 3. Who sees there can be no possible mdifference in the Exteriour Profession of either way, but that

that so high a contrariety of Principles is in this Opposition, that if the Doctrine of Christ be on the one
hand, it is sure Antichristianism must be on the other
hand. 4. Yea who hath in that abstract manner sought
to state the Case herein with his own Soul, as if he were
just come out of Paganism, to give a serious assent
to the Divinity of the Scripture, and were now presented to joyn in with that Prosession of the Christian
Faith, which is most exactly conform to the same,

in the genuine, and perspicuous sence thereof.

In the second place he hath sought to know, how he could imbrace the Popish Creed, and adventure his Eternal state thereon; or how he could extinguish his Reason, and Conscience, so far as to believe that the Hely God would ever impose such a Faith upon men, as this is; I. Where he must abandon these Principles of natural Reason, in the most necessary use thereof, which God hath himse planted in mans Soul; so as not to trust his own Eyes, but others in that great Interest of his Eternal State; and with his own confent be shut out from all proper knowledge of the rule of his Religion; yea account a blind, and unlimited Obedience to men, amongst the highest Excellencies of Faith. 2. Where he must at once believe the Fulness, and Perfection of the Scripture; (which is not only fitted for that great end of bringing Mankind to God, but for such an universal use herein, as to make the Simple wife, and cause the Poor to receive the Gospel; ) and yes believe also, that it is a Mass of dead, and unsensed Characters, until the Romish Clergy put a just Sense thereon, tho its Sense and meaning is the very Soul thereof. Yea thus pair from the Letter of the same, and all Certainty of its Truth, (from Intrinsick Evidence, and these f Markn

Marks, and Characters of its Divinity,) whereby the Christian Cause could be maintain'd against Pa-gans. 3. Where he must believe also that these are the Words of Christ, Job. 7. 17. If any man do my will be shall know my Doctrine, whether it be of God or not, and that men err through not knowing the Scripture, Mat. 22. And yet believe all the while, that these facred Fountains of Light should be sout up, to keep men from Errors; and that the sole right of understanding the same, belongs to a few, not to the Multitude; who yet can pretend no extraordinary Assistance, or Revelation herein, nor will themselves come to these waters of Jealousie to be tried.4. Where he must needs believe that the Scriptures are the Oracles of God committed to the Church, to give answer in every dark Case, Rom. 3.2. The Type and Form of sound Doctrine, Rom. 6.17. Unto whose Sentence in all matters both of Faith and Practice, we are expressly referred, Isa. 8. 20. And yet believe alfo, that it hath no Authority, or Decisive Voice; but what is Precarious, and dependant on the Romifb Church. And thus Confent to have the whole Christian Faith Visibly unbinged of the Foundation of the Scripture; and subjected to a Supream, Visible, and pretended Infallible Judge here in the Earth, with such a claim of Dominion over the Faith of the Saints, as the Aposses of Christ durst never own, but did fully disclaim, 2 Gor. 1.24. 5. Where he must be lieve that Jesus Christ came for this end, to save lost man, and by one Offering bath persetted for ever them that are santisted, Heb. 10, 18. And yet joyn with the same, a Faith of a buman Satisfaction for Sin, so as men may both Merit, Mediate, and Super- . eregate, go above what is needful for themselves; and

And so be saved in the same way of Life, which was by the Covenans of Works; ascribing no more to Christ than the giving Salvation to mens own Merits; which their own Intrinsick Value, and Gondignity, doth require as a Debt. 6. He finds not how in the same Creed he could possibly hold by one Mediator betwint God and Man, where a Plurality for this end is admitted; and by the reality of Christs buman Nature, and his having a true and finite Body, which is subjected to have a new created Being, each time in the Conferrated Host; or believe the Truth of his Sufferings as now fully accomplished, and to be repeated no more, when it is in that daily Sacrifice of the Mass still offered, as a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead. So on the most severe, and impartial inquiry, he cannot find how one holding these Principles should go a further length than Morality; or claim another standing than by a Covenant of Works. 7. Nor knows he how to believe at once the Truth of the Gospel, to be a Do-Etrine of Holiness, and Infinite Pursty, and yet joyn in the same Faith such an Indulgence for men to Sin, that Money may stand for Merit, and the Rich may have the most easte and large Entry into Heaven. Conceit that it is a Priviledge for men to destroy themselves; and by External Severities and Penance to the Flesh. (like to the Lancing and Gashing of Baals Priests, ) Supply the room o Christian Mortification. 8, Yea he finds it not possible to believe, that Sin can only be expiated by the Blood of Christ; and is his alone Work, who hath purged our Sin himself, Heb. 1. 3. Or that there are more than two ways that lead to a stmofold State of men; (a Strass way which leads to a Life, and a Broad unto Destruction, Mat. 7.14.)

and yet believe that there is a Purgatory after this where men must be tormented and suffer extream Pains, to expiate such Venial Sins, as their Prayers, and Penances here could not do; yea he is made to wonder how any who believes such a thing, can ever have true Peace, or Comfort in the World; concluding that Papilts do either take it as a Fiction, or forget themselves, when they are chearful. For the fear of such a place, the Uncertainty of Release, and how long a term it may be ere this Purging Work be compleat, (when their own Wrisers Assign no less time, than 10000 Years as needful to satisfie for some Sins, ) and sear lest it prove a real Hell, must still be a piercing terrour; nor can be believe that such possibly do Credit themselves herein, who assume this Power to Change the Condition of the Dead. Since were it really believed, that the Keys of such a Prison were here in mens hands, and Folk could, by the largest Bribes to the Romish Church, get a safe Deliverance thence; it were not strange to see the *Temporal State of Christendom* in a short time made over to these. We should Judge they were in a strange manner indeed priviledged above the whole residue of men, who by such a Power over the World to come could make so case a Purchase over this also which is present. 9. He finds, and is sure he could never get his Reason and Conscience brought to such a Faith, even the he made a feign-ed Profession herein, of that presended Supremacy of Peter as Bishop of Rome, on which the whole frame and structure of the Papacy leans, and the Vertue of all the Pardons, and Absolutions sounded thereon; on which so many have adventured into an other World; except he would thus build on the Sand on-

ly, but not on the Rock. 10. He finds also how fuch an Erection of the Gospel Church in her Militant State here, as the Papacy in its complex frame is, united in such an Head, as the Pope, ( who as the fole Vicegerent of Christ in the Earth, is at once invested with a Civil Monarchy, and Universal Empire over the Church, to impose, and judge in the highest Transactions which relate to the Eternal State, and Immortal Souls of Men, ) is a thing that as to Matter of Right, is as Forreign to the Scripture, and inconsistent therewith, as Mahumetanism can be. And as to Matter of Fact, is a Trust that no created Being could ever Exercise. 11. He sees, and is sure that he must either lose fight both of the Rule, and Spirit of the Gospel, or have a just abhorrence of that way, wherein he should be inevitably Involwed in a Virtual Consent, and Accessoriness to all that Cruelty, and Blood which for fo many Ages hath been shed therein; when it's so clear that this was no Exorbitance only of Practice; but a Native refult of their Tenets, and Principles, and not only dispensed with, but counted an highly Meritorious Service; yea when it is sure that under no Secular Government of the most Tyrannical State that ever was in the World, hath such Arbitrary Violence, and Oppression been exercised. Or so much Innocent Blood been shed, as by this party, 12. And tho his Judgement stood inderermined, and in an equal Ballance upon this great Controversie, he could not exercise Reason, and not see upon what Hand such a Decision is, as was in Solomons time of the true Mother of the Child; and who do most ruefully seek to interes themselves in the imminent Hazard of the Christian Faish, and who under the least influence of any Tempe-

fance of Christianity, and plead that it be not defroyed in envy and hatred to them; or on what fide it is likely that this manner of Conquest is most followed to gain men to the Profession of the Truth by a prevailing Evidence of their own Light, and Judgment herein, and to require their exactest perso-

nal Tryal, and enquiry about the same,

In the third place, tho he sees there can be no pretence of Doctrinal Wavering about the Reformed Religion, and finds it not easie to comprehend how in one and the same Age, wherein the Truth hath so brightly shined, this way of Popery, should have Prevalence, or gain ground any more, by Seduction with Arguments to the Reason, or Conscience of any; yet since it is an hour of Temptation, and of Fainting, above all that have been hitherto known, and mens eyes are Arrested with such a Prospect of the times, as is like to Stagger the Faith of the most established; he is pressed, (as counting it one of the highest Duties of this day,) to know and search out what may afford greatest Assistance to his Faith, from the Dispensations of Providence therein, and to know the Evidence, and Strength of such Restections as these are for this End.

1. That it's sure, as the smallest things which the Lord does afford, to strengthen and support against such a Storm, should be seriously improved, and taken to Heart; so does it lay us in the way of that Promise for having greater things given to our Observation; yea that now is the time when such as have been most comforted by the Word of Promise, may be put to the sorest Tryal in their Faith of any, to keep off stumbling at the Work of Providence; and be then

myed according to the measure of these Confirmations.

2. Tho the Churches Declinings under greatest measures of Light may be too visible, and that Religion gains not by Persecution as formerly, with such an amazing change as is now in her External Condition, yet he sees it to be no strange thing, when most fignal warnings have gone before of such a Tryal with too evident Dispositions towards the same, and discovery of its approach in all the Causes thereof; yeu might be forfeen by all, that the Holy God would not still bear with an Impure, and menlivened Prefession of the Pure and Glorious Truth of Christianity, which hath now long been one of the most sad, and mortal signs in the publick state of Religion; nor can it be found that ever any Church did decline and fall from the Purity of the Truth, and lose ground herein by External Persecution, where a judicial departure of its Life and Power did not remarkably go before; so as it is not of late, this hath been clearly presaged, that some dark and unusual measure of tryal from Antebrift, and the last Havock of the Re-formed Churches, was drawing near, which would be fore ere it had done its works

3. He sees also, how this present hour is not more searching and dark, than it may be clear herewith, I. That now after the issue of that Opposition, which was betwixt the Christian Faith in the first Entry of the Gospel, and that dying Apostate Church of the Jews; and next, with the Pagan Empire, after that new Erection of the Gospel Church among the Gentiles, which is now over; so is the greatest Tryal of the laster days fixed on the Decision of that long depending Controversie betwixt Christ, and Antichrist. 2. That according to the Scripture we must believe

that as after the manner of Egypt, that glorious Triumph and Delivery of the Church from Antichrist will
be surely carried on; so the more near it comes to the
last asfault; (and when this falls in to have its proper
room in the Frame and Administration of Providence;) the greater Extremity, Terrour, and Darkness may be expected also, such as hath not been in
any former time. Yea with that united and formidable Conjunction of Strength and growing Success of
this Adversary for a time, that the most established
Christians may be in hazard to stagger. 3. That now
is the day wherein the Lord will have men know
what it is to have the Bible as the alone Security of
the Protestant Religion, on which they must entirely
rest no less than as it is the sole Rule and Standard
thereof; which is a Tryal worthy of all that expence
of the Pain, Anguish, and Wrestlings, that can now
possibly attend the same.

4. Whilst the great Standard of Antichrists Kingdom is visibly set up, and brought to the open field, as it's this day in the Church of France, and all humane help taken out of fight; yet does he see herewith, 1. How this now is concluded, as the most infallible Remedy to recover Popery. And that Argument, to which they trust more than to Peters Keys, to wir, these Sanguinary Laws by the Sword, and Rack, which they have again betaken themselves to, tho such an Argument the Scripture never knew, which sober Heathens would abhor, and which gives up the Credit of all Religion to Atheism. 2. That there can be no more evidence of a desperate and sinking Cause than is here, and nothing else can support it, but these weapons which are not against the Conscience; or by any terrour of the second Death, but of

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the first. 3. That this is such an Argument, (if they have not in a strange manner forgot, ) which hath within these 1 eo Years been so fully Answered, and by fuch an immediate Appearance of God in the Kingdom of France, that according to these measures of Cruelty against the Protestants there, so was it returned in a deluge of their own Blood, yea so both the publick state of the Church and Faith of the Saints in the Truth was more deeply rooted; and tho we. yet see not the end of these wonders, but the Dark-side only of the Dispensations of such a day, yet do we. know this fore Rod on the Church, is but as the Saw and An in the Carpenters band, who shall never undo that glorious Work which Christ hath done, and is faill further perfecting on the ruins of Antichrifts King dom.

5. Tho some unusual deeps, and Methods of Suhtiliy be now on foot also against the Truth; yet he cannot but see how nothing could more effectually tend to confirm the Protestant Cause, and take the Credit of Popery off the Consciences of those in their own Profession who are considerate and in the least setious herein; when the World must thus see, I. How easie it is for such to take any Measure, and Latitude in the Doctrinals of their Profession, when this can most serve the juncture of such a time, and beighten or narrow the Controversie betwixt them, and the Reformed Church at their Pleasure; so as to Sacrifice the Church of Rome unto the Court of Rome, if no less can secure that end. 2. That the most horrid Turkish Slavery over mens Bodies comes no such length, as that strange claim that these now make of an absolute Empire over mens Consciences by the Sword; and to put them to such a Tribute of their Obedience, that they thall

shall then be secure, if they but come the length to Sin against their Light, and adventure on so small a thing as to go to Hell, and perish Eternally; since it's an external and feigned Profession of such away that they do thus force from those, who ( they see ) cannot in Faith be perswaded hereof. 3. Yea it hath been too visible how much that Master-plot, and Engine, hath in these times been working, to take men first off from all Sense of Religion, and destroy them in the Morals of Christianity, to make this Conquest more easie, that such may have no Inward Defence, and support against the terrour of bumane Violence. Yea in this way, when they have sought how to divide Protestants among themselves, and betwint Rulers, and them, this seems the lest and greatest Engine of all, how to divide betwint them, and their God, Acting the same Plot, which was laid betwixt Balak and Balaam, as knowing that it's no naked fhew or Profession of the Reformed Religion they need fear, so much as that Old Protestant Spirit in the Power and Life thereof, before which their Interest could never stand; and dread nothing so much as the reviving hereof, which as the hand-writing upon the wall did ever more threaten the fatal ruine of that Kingdom, than any Humane Power, or Strength.

6. Here also he finds just cause of Astonishment, how Kings, or great Men in the Earth should give their Power to support the Romish Interest, which hath been so visibly destructive to theirs: When its not possible to deny how it's first advance, and progress to that Supream beight, which i once attained; and the declining of the Civil Empire, did by the same steps go together; until Magistracy was turned as unto a dead Image, and Shadow except its

being enlivened by their breath and Authority, as it was during the whole height of that Antichristian Power. Nor will it be denyed, that, in these late times, the French Monarchy was never more near its Dissolution in its right Line, than by the Catholick League there; and it would feem not easie to be forgot, how Henry the third, who had most sought to crush the Protest ants there in pursuance of that league, was at last constrained to flee to such for help; or by whom he was killed; and that Heroick Prince Henry the Fourth, who was first stabled in the Mouth, and then in the Heart; yea that the publick Records of that Nation cannot possibly deny, how the House of Bourbon owes its Power and Preservation more to the Protestants, ( without whom it had been fully extinct,) than Abashuerus did to Mordecas the Jew, for what he found written in the Chronicles of Persia, when the Decree was then past to destroy all the feed of the Jews.

7. As in no times past was ever a greater Expectation than is now, which way the Scale will turn, and what will be the end of these wonders, when the nearest events of Providence are so dark and amazing; fo does he find this, in some extraordinary way called for, to be fill, and see what God will do for his Church, and with humble Confidence look for some Dispensation as hath not hitherto been in this extream Exigence. And tho he do not appear in that way, and manner as in former times, that it shall be in a way more fignally glorious, beyond what hath formerly been; yea does in Faith thus judge, that then is the Churches day broke, and hath found the fure way of ber Strength, and right Line of Duty; when her Hope, and Confidence is taken off from all vifible

visible refuges, and entirely settled on her invisible Head, and his Promife put to suit by Prayer without fainting herein. It is fure the Truth, and Faithfulnefs of God Rands ingaged for Antichrists fall, a: well as for Sabvation by Christ, and since he hath said this Adversary shall be broke and brought down, it must surely be, tho the dust of the ground should rise for this end, and now is the Faith of the Saints called for becoming the greatness of such an Affurance, on which are the Eyes of men, of their own Confaiences, of the Elett Angels, yea of the glorious God, to see who does indeed Credit him in this day, when there is no sensible support herein; and tho it now threatens forely the departure of many from the Faith, who had some visible Profession thereof, yet may it be hoped for, that the turn of the next Tide shall bring in more, with a Solid, and true Increase to the Church, than these sad days do now take off.

CHARACT. VI. It is thus a Confirmed Christian should be specially considered, as one who is not only at rest on the known certainty of his Faith, but is ready to render some account of the solid rational grounds and demonstrations hereof, unto all who ask after the same, and doth thus judge, 1. That these are the proper and appointed means which the Lord hath assorted for the greatest Consumation of mens Faith within time; yea preserable to any external Miracles, which are more extraordinary and remote Assistances thereto. 2. That these are given as so great help to his Joy, and Excitement of his Assections to follow the Lord fully, as make him wonder how the greatness of these things, which men are called to believe, can come near their thoughts, and yet no more take them up about this Consirming

Work. 3. That the too visible neglect hereof, both with respect to the Youth and Community of Professours in the Church, seems one of the sad, and fundamental defects of this day. The Reasons hereof, with some clear view of these means which might most answer such an end, are briefly offered, in this preceding Work.

CHARACT. VII. A truly Confirmed Christian may in the last place be herein also considered, as such whose Faith being oft tryed through all these Stages of Christianity he hath been taken; hath some proper Record of the most choice, and fignal Confirmations of bis Life, to improve the same not only for his own Support in that last warfare of death, but for strengthning the Faith of others; wherein he does thus judge, 1. That there could be no true support or relief from Religion here in the Earth, if it cannot bear out then. And that Death is the great Touchstone and Trial, when the true value and difference betwist things of an Eternal Truth and Substance, and the things of this World, will be best seen. 2. He reckons each real Christian, by his Profession then engaged and accountable, ( even by some explicite personal Testimony,) to put to his Seal that God is True, and bear the same witness with his last and dying breath to the Truth of Christianity, which he gave in the whole course of his Life; and of that joy, complacence, and affurance of Mind, which be hath found, and now hath in the way of Truth; So as to press the tame on his dearest Relations, as their alone true Intere 1. 3. He sees also, how honourable it is for the Lord, that such whose Faith hath been oft tried, (and when thus with Joy, and Admiration he can look back on the most pressing and conspicuous

Conflicts of time, ) should have it their last work to pay in some Tribute of Praise, unto bim, whose Word, and Promise unto them did yet never fail. 4. He accounts the more weighty Tryals he hath been carried thorow in his Christian warfare, do both add more to this Service, and impart more to the value of such a Testimony. 5. He judgeth this one special way, and advantage, whereby one Generation might declare the Truth and Faithfulness of God unto another, in a Family Line and Relation, to shew forth thus that the Lord is upright; that he is their Rock, and with him is no Unrighteousness. Yea which should be matter of unspeakable Joy, when now in his turn he can fay that such hath the Lord been to him; what were Davids dying Words, I Kings 1. 14. Who bath delivered my Soul out of all distress, how that in no trouble, or exigence of his Lite, he was ever left without a door of Hope, and thus also with Caleb, Josh. 14. 10. To give in some such witness for God, I am now near the close of time, and do testifie, that the Word of his Truth, and Promise, he hath surely accomplished; which hath brought me safe and he nourably sbrough, when such as did distrust the same by misbelief, and sought after another refuge, sound all their Confidences fail. 6. And knowing likewise how great a suprizal Death may be; and that such as have shined in their day, may yet set under a cloud and go silent off the Stage; he judgeth it the more needful to have such a piece of bis dying work prepared, as one of the choicest Legacies he can bequenth to his Surviving Friends, in a feason when it hath usually the greatest advantage of weight and acceptance : it being fill qualified with Christian Prudence, and Humble Sobriery; fo as all may fee its whole in-

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tent is to commend to mens Conscience the way of Truth and Godliness and not themselves, and thus only direct, for the proper use, and improvement of their nearest Relations. I know it may be strange to some, what is spoke upon this Head; but as it's sure the present day hash its Duty, and each time of our Life hath some proper work, so I humbly judge, that this seems to fall in, as the last Service of a dying Christian to his Generation, to deliger off his hand the Truth which he had received and hath oft prowed, with his Confirmatory Seal and Testimony thereto. And now in some more than ordinary way called for in this hour of great darkness, when if that Security of the Absolute Promises stood not good to the Church, we might fear Religion might quickly wear out, and Truth perish from the Earth; and as fo folemn and weighty a thing should be managed with much humble Prudence, so it may be judged that no serious, and observing Christian, but hath some peculiar ingagements under which they find themselves held even beyond others, yea some such Singular Confirmations in the Journal of their Life, that should not be easie to bide under the ground; where the frengthning of others hereby is concerned, and that such should not then leave the Cross of Jesus Christ at a loss, or part therewith without their Testimony, which hath left them at so great an Adwantage. And though this is not to offer particular Rules in such a Duty, but that Christian Wisdoms must direct herein, as the present Case is circumstantiated, yet might it bethoped, were this more taken to Heart, it should be a singular means to make more deep Impressions of mens dring Work on their Spirits. Even whilst they are in bealth, to excise Digitized by Google.

their surviving Friends, and to keep Religion thus alive in a Family state, and Relation, and gain a more venerable respect to the same on mens Consciences; yea to fix also stronger ingagements on the succeeding offspring.

Thus is presented here a short Idea of the solid and judicious Work of Christian Confirmation in the Truth. under these foregoing Characters, to shew how rare an attainment of Religion this is, yea to present herein a special Series and Scale of the greatest feps in this Confirmatory work, by which it should be followed. And where none of these may be parted from other, though some be of an higher, and more absolute use for such an end. And if it should be obje-Eted here, What needs any such expense of time, or pains in this Case, when it's sure the Essential Truths of the Gospel are not questioned, and that without internal evidence of the Spirit, no external means of this kind can be of use. I know that it's the alone work of the Holy Ghoft, to beget a Divine and supernatural Faith; without which the furthest Light, and Objective Evidence, though backed with a continued Dispensation of External Miracles, could never bear Christians out, either as to Duty, or Comfort, in their passage thorow time; yea nothing is in the least here to subject the Credit of our Faith to mens Rational Comprehension, but rather tends to enervate wholly the strength of any such Tenet, and take off all pretence for the same: But it's sure also, I must quit all folid Security in the way of Religion, and any clear founding in the Light and Certainty of the Scripture, or admit these things as undeniable, 1. That supernatural Faith is the most highly rational Light that's within time, And that none who profess the Name

Name of Christ can be of so low a fize, as should not be pressed, and excited to be much about this Ground-work of knowing the Truth, and Principles of their Profession upon its own Evidence; yea are thus called as new born Babes to drink in the sincere Milk of the Word, 1 Pet. 2. Which, as it's clearly in the Original, is the rational Milk of the Word, to be thus received no less on Conviction, and Certainty of the Judgment, than with the out going of their affections. 2. That as it's not conceiveable how a srue and firm Affent can be to Divine Truth, but on its known Certainty, so here is no resolving of the Christians Faith on the strongest rational Evidences hereof, which must still be resolved on the Testimony of God, made clear and evident to them to be such. 3. It is sure also, the Lord hath not given to large a measure of these Grounds, and Demonstrations of his Truth with such redoubled Arguments of that kind, to be of fo small regard, as is with most. But for some great, and universal use hereof to the whole Church, and knew how needful such Assistances to the Faith of his People would be, whilft they are on the Earth. 4. That these means, which tend most convincingly to found a rational Assurance in the Judgment, are the proper Vebicle of the Spirit of God, by which his fealing Work, should be both fought and expected; nor can I judge how the Credit, and use hereof should be so small, and not on the same Ground quit any External Ordinance of the Gospel; which without the Spirit of the Lord can never profit, nor how we should expect and fuit his Confirming Work on the Soul, when thefe greatest Confirming Means, which he hath given to the Church, have no just weight: But oh! how wonderful a Teacher is the Holy Ghoft, when such ordinary means fail, and are inaccessible, by furnishing his People sthen with these strongest Arguments of Love, and Power, who having had but small Measures of Light, yet were not unfaithful to improve the smallest degree of such a Talent? 5. Yea so great a thing is it, to attain a folid Faith of Things wholly remote from our Sense, and so far above the reach, and Apprehension of Nature, or to have an absolute reliance on an invisible Refuge, for our present and Eternal State, as no common Assent

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can answer, when the very rest and quiet of the Soul must needs lie in the fure and firm Perswasion hereos. 6. It is too vifible also how little the Practical Use of such a mean hath yet been essaied in the Church, the all who are members thereof might no less know the Strength and Firmness of the Foundation of their Faith by its own Evidence, than the General Articles of Religion. The most usual instructing work lies almost wholly about the Neetick part of Divinity, there feems not that ferious regard to preis the Diametick part hereof on Mens Conscience, as if this were to be restrained to a sew who are more Knowing, Learned, and of an Inquisitive Spirit about the rational Certainty of the Truth, and for whom these choice and abundant helps of this kind, which are in this Age, seem more peculiarly directed. It's sure, that the Christian Faith in the first times did remarkably then spread. and prevail, by these clear Evidences bereof to the Judgment, made Effestual by the Spirit of God, more than by extraordinary Miracles. Nor knew they otherwise what It was to be Christians, but by imbracing the Truth with a full Assurance of Understanding, no less than of Delight and Affection. But if it be objected, it is not the Case now, where Religion is planted in a Nation, and hath an uncontrollable Publick Profeffion under the support of Humane Laws; I know no admitted weight this can have, except that should be therewith, that Christians now be Born, and not new-created. 7. Yea is it not fure, (tho it seem little understood,) that the prima-17 Grounds, and Evidences of our Faith are not only as to their End demonstrative of the Truth, and Divinity of the Scripture, but are upon the Matter, such Demonstrations also which most natively result from the same by infallible Consequence; and are thus to be accounted not as Humane, but, Divine Arguments, given us by the Spirit of God. 8. I shall but further add, how such as do seriously ponder things, will find this Demonstration to be no more important than clear, that to be a Confirmed Christian, and a Confirmed Protestant are Convertible Terms; and that if these that are under that Deplorable Bondage, and Darkness of Popery were but once awaked to see the Truth, and Certainty of the Christian Faith, by its Intrinsick and Objective Evidence, and taken off that brutish Credulity, and Dependance on the alone Credit of others herein, it might be faid the strongest Engine to hold up that Profession were then broke, and we should see the Deal Etrine, and Rule of Faith to be of fuch full, and perspicuous Evistic

dende from the Scripture, as without Blasphems they could not seek from the Lord to give them a plaintr Rule, than what he hath there given.

READER.

TS like you may think strange, how these sew Sheets in the L close fall in here, after the foregoing part was finished; but the they meet in one Design, and Interest, yet was not this then intended until the former was done, and if it might tend to a folid use, and Fruit unto any, I shall forbear a further Apology herein. I may traig far, the weight of the Subject hath carried it some further length than was designed, when I so much sought to be short, as I aim at in any thing of this kind, that through my destre to avoid any unnecessary multiplying of Words, I fear lest it may make fome things feem a little dark at the first view : Tho I bope, not upon any ferious perusal of the same. Two things I must further crave leave to add; I. That when some Succinct View of the great Affifiances. and Confirmations of our Faith is here offered, which thefe of the lowest Capacity of the Church, might with that advantage improve. as in a few hours, by reading it some times over, may be so far impreffed on their Mind and Judgment, that they could give fome clear and judicious account thereof; it may be by such but seriously weighed, and taken to Heart of what concern the use hereof, 2. That I humbly judge also it were a most special Service for the Truth in this day, to have some short Directory, and remembrancer of the great Acts of the Lord, and Monuments of his Providence now under the New Testament, in that manner held forth as might most tend to some Universal Use of all within the Church. I Confess my defire pressed me to some small Esay berein, with intent to bave jorned it to this Work, but having with much Conviction laid this wholly aside, as to any further appearance that way, so is it with an Earnest Defire, that some more qualified, might take to Heart and under their Hand fo great a Service both for their Generation and Pofterity. It is sure the Lord hath designed his People to Be taught the greatness of his Works as well as the precepts of his Word, and as no Duty is more pressed than this under the Old Testament, both as to Publick and Family Iustruction, so are we no less accountable in #166. Last times for this Improvement of such as are of known, publick, and un-controlable Evidence, and should be the care of each Age to have that Solemn Remembrance bept up hereof, so as not a few, but the very Multitude within the Church might be as a publick Library, and Repository of the same.

